Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Banana Kelly High School
High school 08X530
965 Longwood Ave.
Bronx
NY 10459

Principal: Asya Johnson

Dates of Review:
May 4, 2017 - May 5, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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

Banana Kelly High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Rating</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>
## Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

The staff strategically build an effort-based culture that stresses scholarly conduct, diligence, accountability, and a growth mindset by establishing schoolwide teams to maintain trust and positive attitudes.

### Impact

The environment is safe and school leaders include students in decisions that affect their learning experiences. At least one staff member knows each student well and plays an invaluable role in ensuring that they adopt effective academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students across grades state they feel safe and are known well by the staff. “Principal Johnson really cares about us. We can speak to her about anything.” Students shared that the principal has an open door policy and responds to their needs and there is always an adult available that they can turn to for assistance. Additionally, this family atmosphere, according to staff, parents, and teachers interviewed, contributes to an environment where conflicts and incidents have significantly decreased over the past year as the learning environment is focused on academic improvement and achievement. The most recent School Survey reflected a 17 percent increase from school year 2015-2016 relative to the question on whether students feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms, and cafeteria. Furthermore, in order for teachers to support students’ development of personal and academic behaviors, such as resilience and persistence, teachers receive professional development in the areas of social and emotional development and ongoing assistance from their colleagues who push-in to classrooms to support academics. During the student meeting, students stated that teachers tutor them, resulting in a higher course pass rate. On the LES, 88 percent of students stated that their teachers, administrators, counselors and the principal help keep them on track for college or career.

- There are organized support services including the School Implementation Team (SIT) that assist students inside and outside of the classroom. Team members engage in regularly scheduled meetings where they facilitates case conferences. Staff use an effort based checklist to evaluate growth in scholarly conduct, working diligently, accountability and ownership of learning, and growth mindset (SWAG) which provides their students with the desired outcomes while holding them to high expectations for their own academic and personal success. A review of meeting minutes illustrated teachers identifying strategies, challenges and how best staff can support students to ensure success in their classes. There are also dedicated advisors who provide daily check-ins with students, and who coordinate services.

- The school’s theory of action states, “If we treat our scholars with respect, hold them accountable and respond to their needs they will perform better in the classroom.” During the meeting, students shared that the school gives them the tools to be successful and staff treat them with respect. Students during the meeting shared their interpretation of SWAG and how their grades have improved from one year to the next. One student stated and others agreed, “I trust my teachers. They want the best for me so I want to do better for myself. Another student stated, “SWAG means no excuses, I can never stop trying to improve.” Student-led meetings allow students opportunities to speak and discuss items of importance with school leaders. For example, students shared that the prior school name, Banana Kelly High School, did not define who they are or what they aspire to be. Students discussed how their school’s collegiate programs assist them in their classes and help them prepare to take college entrance exams, which resulted in the school’s newly adopted name of Longwood Preparatory Academy.
Area of Focus

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

Assessment practices are aligned to the school’s curricula and incorporate the use of ongoing checks for understanding; however, there are some missed opportunities for students to receive effective feedback to accelerate their next learning steps.

Impact

Assessment data provides teachers with feedback on students’ performance across most subject areas. Although most teachers address immediate needs of individuals or groups of students to accelerate their learning, and some students receive limited feedback in some subject areas hindering student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses multiple assessments, including but not limited to Regents, pre- and post-unit tests, and performance tasks that are aligned to the standards across all content areas. All stakeholders are informed of the administration of assessments via a yearlong calendar. Additionally, there is also a Common Core Standards tracker monitoring student achievement of the standards so that there is continual feedback relative to student achievement. Teachers use the information culled from the assessments to inform students of their progress and to schedule them for extra support via tutoring. Students feel the feedback given to them from the assessments, their writing, and classwork is helping them to improve.

- Across classrooms visited, academic tasks had an accompanying rubric that students use to know what they have to do. Yet, although students are benefiting from actionable feedback regarding progress in the midst of their struggle, there are times that the feedback does not sufficiently, as students shared, “extend their thinking and encourage independency towards next steps.” When asked if they have ever used rubrics in class, students said, "We use rubrics in every class and get the rubric when we get the assignment." Students not only routinely use rubrics to self-assess, but also to assess their peer’s class assignments as seen in student work samples. For example, feedback on an English paper noted, “Excellent, supporting details! Also, you properly cited your textual evidence. Ask a peer to read your essay aloud, so we could catch the minor mistakes.”

- Most teachers employ strategies to check for student understanding throughout a lesson; however, there was little evidence that teachers use this information to make an in-the-moment adjustment to instruction during the delivery of the lesson. For example, in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, a teacher directed students to “Hold up your red, yellow, and green cards to determine your understanding.” All students gave a sign that represented their level of understanding. The teacher continued the lesson despite a student expressing difficulty. Other students in the class, were dependent on the teachers to check the answers. In most classrooms visited, formative assessment practices were embedded in daily lessons via questioning, sharing of ideas from a group or partner work. Additionally, some teachers were observed using a checklist to track student learning.
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 and academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core and the instructional shifts and are refined using student work and data.

Impact

Purposeful decision-making at the school level promotes access to Common Core aligned curricula for diverse learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to ensure that all learners are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Administrators and teachers have spent considerable time over the past year, including summer planning time, to review and revise curriculum across all content areas and align yearlong units of study to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. For a culminating global history task, students write a well-developed argumentative paragraph, one that develops and supports a claim with evidence and analysis, as well as addresses and refutes the counterclaim. Students were to defend a position and formulate an argument drawing upon the arguments of the authors and support their point of view. English unit plans include closed reading, text-based writing, questioning, and discussion. The module also includes performance-based and summative assessments, a culminating performance-based assessment, a student checklist, as well as scaffolds, modifications and extensions and resources for vocabulary and text-dependent questions. Units of study include key areas such as focus on text-based evidence in discussions and writing, use of academic vocabulary, and writing from sources to explain, inform, or argue perspectives.

- Teachers plan units of study using the Understanding by Design process. Teachers’ unit plans identify desired results, name the standards addressed in the unit, surface interdisciplinary connections, and delineate learning objectives, academic skills, essential questions, vocabulary, assessment evidence, the performance tasks, student self-assessments, the learning plan, lesson activities, and reflections. The unit plans provide a foundation and are directly connected to the lesson plans’ learning target and scholar conduct, working diligently, accountability for learning, and growth mindset (SWAG) target.

- Academic tasks and lessons reviewed reflect consistent planning of essential questions, discussion prompts, and rationale for relevance of content for future learning. Amendments to learning targets, resources, and strategies are based on students’ identified needs and are evidenced in notations made by teachers directly on the lesson plan. They include a variety in texts, adding time to length of unit, and providing exemplars for writing tasks. The principal and teachers concur that curricula are a set of live documents that are revised frequently to address the needs of students. For example an analysis of data including student writing across grades, State assessments, and previous feedback to the school based on a prior Quality Review, prompted the leadership to prioritize writing and academic language as a focus for all grades and content areas. The adjustments made in the current English curriculum, include Writing is Thinking with Strategic Inquiry, a program for building strategies across all subjects by helping students develop an intentional focus on the use of sentence strategies to build complexity and clarity, are shared with teachers in the upper grades to address the schoolwide need. As a result of this focused work around the alignment of curriculum and revisions to support students’ learning needs, the school is advancing all students, include the diverse learners, to meet the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and prepare them for post-secondary work.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching practices are rooted in an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Tasks and teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and supports.

Impact

Coherence in teaching practices ensures that students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the classrooms, teachers demonstrated a set of beliefs about how students learn, specifically “I do, We do, and You do,” which is the gradual release of responsibility method. The principal and teachers articulate the belief that students learn best through engagement in rigorous content and skill development, rich discussion that requires them to reflect on and analyze new concepts, and demonstration of their thinking through writing about their learning. These elements are present in most classrooms to varying degrees. For example, in one lesson, students were asked to solve quadratic equations by working in groups and giving each other feedback. In another class, students read scenes from Hamlet, and discussed character motives and expression, and presented excerpts from the script to the class. Students in all classrooms were engaged in directed tasks and responded to discussion prompts by the teacher. In some classrooms, discussions were amongst students.

- The school is persistent in its efforts to provide instructional supports necessary for students to engage in rigorous learning tasks. During all classroom visits, teachers use the SmartBoard to display visuals, review the lesson objectives, and discuss the content. Many classes had multiple adults to support student learning. For example, in an Earth science class a second teacher supported students as they worked to determine the relationship between dew point and relative humidity. Learners were also seen referencing printed copies of the projected PowerPoint for note taking and using Venn diagrams, and teachers were directing them to the textbook as needed. Graphic organizers were used to facilitate student thinking and organize writing.

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently work to provide multiple entry points to ensure that students are engaged in challenging tasks. As a result of such practices, students, including those with learning challenges, were able to produce meaningful work products. For example, students extracted and explained text evidence that demonstrated how the causes of World War I led to the rise of Adolf Hitler. In an English class, students using various artifacts and documents, worked with partners to identify strong, relevant and sufficient expert evidence.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to families about their children’s path to college and career readiness. The school’s culture for learning ensures that all students are prepared for the next level.

Impact
Families understand students' progress towards the next level of learning and students are being supported to reach their goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and staff work together to ensure that students receive the support and resources they need in order to compete and succeed beyond graduation. The students embrace the focus on college and career readiness. They spoke of their future goals and how teachers hold them accountable for conducting themselves with excellence in academic work. Students shared during the interview that the principal communicates high expectations to them as well. Students stated, “Because of what she has accomplished in a few months, we are being exposed to higher expectations through college fairs.” Other students stated that the new principal recently bought new desks that allow students to work in partnerships and teams reinforcing 21st century skills.

- The principal has an open door policy with students and families and maintains up-to-date information on student academic progress so that she is able to communicate, clarify, and assist with planning for student success. Parents indicated that the principal constantly communicates with them and uses every opportunity to discuss their children’s academic and social-emotional development. Parents stated that the school communicates via email, phone calls, and mail. Parents shared that the school uses PupilPath that allows parents and students to view student and school information, such as student attendance records, class schedule, and grades, online, thus providing continuous feedback to support families with understanding their children’s progress.

- Teachers and administrators meet with students to counsel and support their needs. Additionally, teachers volunteer their time to assist in the Apex Learning Credit Recovery program; conducting tutorials for students, cultivating a Regents re-take culture, and engaging students in discussions about progress in their classes. A graduating senior stated, “We have benefitted from the support of our teachers.” The guidance counselor frequently analyzes student scholastic and attendance rates and meets with students and parents to create guidance plans that lead both to graduation and college and career preparation. The school leaders offer students opportunities to visit colleges, provide support with college essay writing and review of transcripts, and apprise them and their families of important events such as presentations of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions.

**Impact**
Teacher teams work to improve teacher practice, impact progress of students towards goals, and assist in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**
- School goals are promoted through the work of teacher teams by their analyzing student work and sharing best practices that are focused on strengthening the use of instructional shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards. The global history inquiry team used a protocol to focus on analyzing the data from the January Regents data to identify areas of student need and look at patterns across the grade. The team agreed that students were not demonstrating mastery in geography, economic and political systems. Next steps included providing focused map questions to students, incorporating key economic concepts such as traditional economy, feudalism, and encomienda system in lessons, and unpacking vocabulary words.

- After conducting an item analysis, teachers realized that students were leaving task three blank on the 2017 English Regents or were receiving a score of 2.5 or lower. Since students had difficulties with central idea and/or a writing strategy, teachers created a central idea tool to guide students when they analyze unit texts. As a result, from January 2016 to January 2017, there was a 13 percent decrease in the number of students who left task three blank.

- Distributive leadership opportunities and teacher voice are present throughout the school. Teacher leaders represent teachers on instructional matters, disseminate information, provide coaching for teachers, and facilitate workshops, and senior teachers serve as mentors for new teachers. School leaders stated that teachers are involved in all aspects of the school including crafting the school goals and determining professional development topics. Teachers explained how the school leaders have supported teachers in building leadership capacity and promoting their voice in key school decisions. For example, the School Implementation Team meets to discuss and develop social-emotional services for students with individualized educational plans and for at-risk students. Another example of teacher voice includes the development of SWAG that is embedded in lesson plans and used to promote high expectations.