Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 021 Crispus Attucks
Elementary 16K021
180 Chauncey Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Leslie Frazier
Dates of Review:
November 28, 2017 - November 29, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Debra Tasioudis
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. 021 Crispus Attucks 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>
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<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>
</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>
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## School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
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## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Area of Celebration</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>
</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>
</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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings
School leaders allocate resources, such as planning time, and professional learning partnerships to improve curricula. Teacher assignments and student program groupings align with instructional goals.

Impact
Curricular resources and scheduling decisions provide opportunities for students to engage in challenging academic tasks and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader’s use of resources, particularly providing coaching and establishing partnerships, align to the school’s instructional goals, ensuring that teachers develop rigorous tasks aligned to the Common Core. Teachers across the grades participate in the 2017-2018 Teachers College Writing Project cohort and across the school they have implemented the use of checklists to help guide students in their writing pieces. Teachers use the checklists so that during writing tasks students can check off completed parts of the activity as they work. In a third grade class, teachers use a rubric with an added column, so students are provided with clear expectations for writing. It was evident from student work products and attached student reflections observed in classrooms, and in speaking with students during their meeting, that they use the checklists to ensure that they are meeting the demands of the Common Core, including explaining textual evidence.

- Aligned with the school’s goal in math, and in response to trends in student performance on the New York State math exam, the school now participates in Algebra for All to ensure that the math curricula, particularly in fifth grade, is rigorous and aligned to the Common Core. The school has departmentalized the fifth grade, and students have a dedicated math teacher. Two of the school’s fifth grade teachers receive onsite coaching from an Algebra for All coach eight times a year to ensure that teaching strategies lead to rigorous math instruction. As a result, classroom discussions in math and student work across the school focuses on students explaining their math thinking. In classrooms and in student work products students are using graphic organizers, such as problem solving mats to explain the strategies they have selected to create visual representations of a problem, to show their work, and explain why their method for problem solving is reasonable. Student work products, as well as student discussions, demonstrated student use of these methods for discussing and writing about their math thinking, thus aligned with the school's goal.

- To ensure that teacher assignments and student programming effectively support access to learning opportunities that lead to college and career readiness the school reorganized its special education program to reflect the needs of the students as per their Individualized Education Programs, (IEP), and as a result closed a self-contained special education class and opened an Integrated Co-Teaching class. This has supported all learners having access to appropriate rigorous instruction and teacher support.

- The school is participating in a yearlong series of data-driven instruction (DDI) professional learning. As a result it has developed a DDI Team, comprised of school leaders and teachers, who are looking closely at student data to determine appropriate student program groupings and interventions. This new team is a part of a long-term plan to grow teacher leaders and spread data-driven instructional practices and interventions across the school and is beginning to allow teachers to hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for student progress.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Classroom teaching practices are becoming aligned to the school leader’s belief that students learn best when the teacher serves as facilitator, rather than the center of instruction. Not all student work products and discussions reflect high levels of rigor.

Impact

Teacher-led instruction leads to uneven levels of student writing, discussions, and student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching practices across the school are beginning to reflect the belief that students learn best when teachers utilize the workshop model, and provide adequate time for both teacher modeling and facilitating student discourse, rich in academic vocabulary. In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, teachers utilized the workshop model, briefly modeling problem solving strategies, and turned the rest of the period over to student groups to analyze and solve multi-step word problems. Similarly, in a third grade ICT, teachers modeled strategies for drawing conclusions from story details before sending students off to stations to work together in small groups, some with additional teacher instruction. While these examples of brief teacher modeling and small group work were not typical across classrooms, they evidence practices aligned with the school leader’s and teachers’ beliefs about how students learn best.

- In other classrooms, teacher-led instruction, or teacher-to-student questioning dominated the period. For example, in a lower grade writing class, the teacher held students at the rug for most of the period, explaining sounds that animals make and how to identify emotions from illustrations. The teacher also created a model for students of how to draw an animal conveying emotion and writing a sentence about it. While the elements of the workshop model were in place, students had little opportunity to engage in discourse, except for a brief turn and talk, in which some students did not participate. Similarly, in a lower grade ICT social studies class, students were broken up into three groups, two with a teacher, and the third with a paraprofessional. The adults at each group led the discussions, and asked questions to individual students, limiting opportunities for students to engage in discourse with one another, or demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation.

- In some classes, teachers use a shared resource called Back Pocket Questions to increase levels of student thinking and participation in group discussions. In a first grade math class, a teacher invited a student up to model a problem, and then opened up a whole class discussion asking, “What do we already know about this type of problem?”, to which many students in the class raised their hands and engaged in discussion about many different ways to use ten frames. In other classes, teachers attempted to have similarly rich class discussions using open-ended questions, as was observed in a writing lesson about sentence fragments, but students gave short responses to the teacher, rather than engaging with one another’s ideas, resulting in mixed levels of student thinking and participation.
Findings
School leaders and teachers align the curricula to the Common Core, with a focus on questioning, academic vocabulary, and deep understanding in math. The planned curricula are rigorous and consistently emphasize higher-order skills across grades.

Impact
The school’s curricula promote college and career readiness skills, and is accessible for all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- Units and pacing guides are coherent across grades, with a focus on skill building and students’ deep understanding. A fourth grade science unit aligned to the content standards, centered around energy, introduces students to the subject and has them hypothesize about how different forms of energy affect their daily lives; by fifth grade, students deepen this inquiry into energy by exploring electricity and magnetism. Math units across the grades show similar alignment to the Common Core and include prior knowledge that students need as well as prerequisite skills to ensure that teachers are able to emphasize rigorous habits and skills for all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

- Similarly, reading units focus on particular skills connected to the Common Core. Consistently across the grades units connect to selected text, as was observed in a first grade unit on reading fiction. The units focus on understanding characters, story structure, and sequencing events, and provide for texts in the Journeys reader, as well as aligned supplemental texts, to make sure that all students are given rigorous tasks and practice the skills at appropriate levels.

- Lesson plans include Back Pocket Questions so that teachers ask higher-order questions to deepen student thinking. A second grade math unit on place value included questions such as, “How can you use place value to model, write and compare three digit numbers?”, to help open up the first lesson in the unit and launch student thinking about place value in word problems. Similarly, an upper grade poetry unit posed questions that grow in complexity, such as, “What is the literal meaning? What is the deeper meaning?” The inclusion of these Back Pocket Questions in units and lesson plans help to ensure that the curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and are accessible for a variety of learners.

- In math, units and lessons have a focus on two instructional shifts; deep understanding and fluency. Lessons and units across the grades focus on the ability of students to think deeply about the strategies that they have chosen and to explain their math thinking, in drawings, words, and math sentences. A third grade lesson on using arrays to model products and factors, typical of other math lesson plans observed, provided strategies for students to unlock the problem, engage in math talk, and highlighted specific math vocabulary to be shared and used by students, such as factor, array, product and column. A fifth grade social studies lesson plan on describing the checks and balances of government also focused on academic vocabulary, planned for differentiated groups, and frontloaded vocabulary terms to ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs, have access to the content standards.
**Additional Finding**

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

Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of rubrics and glows and grows aligned to the curricula, ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Ongoing assessment and grading practices provide actionable feedback for students to guide their work and help teachers make effective adjustments to instruction in the classroom.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, most student work posted was graded with Common Core-aligned rubrics and included written feedback to students in the form of glows and grows. Similarly, students at a question and answer session also shared work that followed the school’s grading policy, levels one through four, that provided them with actionable feedback. One student shared a diorama he created for a social studies project on the Bill of Rights. The student created a modern-day visual representation on the freedom of assembly (protesting football players), and shared a rubric aligned to the task, with feedback from the teacher in the form of a glow and a grow. The teacher praised the student’s concept, and for a grow asked the student to, “Explain in more detail their reason for protesting.” This clear grow or next step was evident in student work shared across the grades and content areas.

- On a math task also shared at the student meeting, a student received feedback on a constructed response on a math exam, using a premade feedback template commonly seen across classrooms. The teacher wrote, “You did an excellent job comparing, adding and subtracting decimals. In the future, you should include math vocabulary when explaining how you solved the problem.” This feedback aligns to the school’s curricula, and provides actionable feedback to the student and teacher about the student’s next step.

- In many classes, teachers check for understanding through questioning, and often a quick thumbs up, sideways, or down to check the pulse of the class, and make adjustments to meet student-learning needs. For example, in an upper grade writing class, the teacher probed students about the meaning of a vocabulary term, and asked the class for thumbs up, sideways or down to express their agreement, uncertainty, or disagreement with their peer about its meaning. This was also seen in several other classes, as a way for the teacher to quickly take the pulse of the class and sometimes to ask additional questions to help adjust student thinking.

- Across the subjects and grades, including social studies, ELA and math classes, teachers used tracking sheets to record student thinking throughout the lesson to help form student groups or record student thinking to make future adjustments, or they are making on-the-spot adjustments for students. In an ELA class with two teachers and a paraprofessional, all adults took notes on student thinking as they observed student thinking at stations throughout the classroom and hallway. They then took moments to briefly confer with one another, before prompting students with new questions or moving students to another station.

- Student self- and peer-assessment were evident in student work products shared in a meeting with students. One student shared, “In my class, we work in groups, especially in writing and reading. We give our classmates feedback about things to add to their writing, or things that they could do better.” This was also observed in student work posted in classrooms and in student folders, demonstrating that self- and peer-assessment help to evaluate student learning and provide information as to next steps to address students’ learning needs.
**Findings**

School leaders effectively and consistently communicate high expectations to staff, particularly around the use of data and questioning techniques in instruction. Through the school’s open door policy, frequent conversations, and the growing use of technology, school leaders and staff consistently communicate with families about their children’s progress.

**Impact**

School leaders provide support and hold teachers accountable for high expectations through observations and ongoing conversations aligned with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Feedback helps families to understand the school’s expectations and support their children’s progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school leaders communicate high expectations for staff through a variety of communication tools about professionalism, instruction, the including of families, and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers at a question and answer session shared that the school leaders articulate clear expectations through emails, one-on-one and group conversations, through grade leaders, and professional learning sessions on Mondays. The principal also publishes a semi-weekly letter to staff, communicating expectations around data discussions, keeping communication logs of parent engagement, and questioning and discussion techniques and formative assessment practices connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher observation reports align to these expectations and serve as a means for reinforcing expectations and holding teachers accountable for expected pedagogical practices.

- Professional learning sessions, on-site on Mondays, and others at off-site workshops provide teachers with training to meet expectations, particularly for understanding and meeting the demands of the Common Core. Professional learning topics include math talks, reading comprehension and writing strategies, and planning to meet student needs through analysis of common assessment data. Teachers at a question and answer session shared that there is a growing sense of mutual accountability among school staff, as teachers are beginning to lead some professional learning sessions, and though infrequent, teachers are also self-selecting to participate in intervisitations into one another’s classrooms to improve their practices, particularly around questioning and discussion routines.

- Administrators use environment walkthrough checklists as they visit classrooms and review outside bulletin boards, and provide teachers with written feedback about the quantity and quality of student work, use of rubrics and feedback to students. In one environment walkthrough, the teacher was rated effective across an array of items, but developing in evidence of self-reflection posted on student’s work. The administrator provided that, “The student should be encouraged to reflect on their own work products,” so he/she makes clear their expectations and provides the teacher with further support to achieve those expectations.

- Parents articulated that communication of expectations and student progress is a strength of the school. There is a growing use of a phone application that allows parents to get live updates on behavior and class assignments. Parents also noted frequent conversations between families and teachers, guidance, and administrators help them to monitor their children’s progress. Progress reports sent home include current and expected reading levels, as well as questions to ask their children at home as they read. Workshops in reading and math also offer ongoing feedback to parents to help them understand expectations and their children’s progress.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teachers engage in professional collaborations that are taking on an inquiry approach. During these collaborations teachers analyze student work.

Impact

Collaborations are beginning to result in improved teacher practice and increasing student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The focus of the fourth grade teacher team observed was tied to math problem-solving. During the meeting, teachers reviewed a strategy that a teacher had tried out with her students that morning. The team leader shared that the focus of the meeting was on a math organizer that she observed a colleague using. The team members also reviewed some samples of student work at the meeting, as the presenting teacher shared, “I grabbed a few pieces of struggling students’ work.” As teachers reviewed the student work samples, they discussed strengths and weaknesses, and talked about ways they might adapt the organizer for their students, or offer exit slips to gauge students’ problem solving strategies, demonstrating a loose connection to an inquiry structure.

- While, from a review of team records, the teacher team observed seemed focused over time on student problem solving in math, the team did not have a definitive strategy or group of students for whom they would track progress toward goals. Teachers reviewed some student work, and shared that they track their class’ performance on assessments and conduct an item skills analysis so that they know what to reteach, and to plan for small group instruction. Beyond this broad item analysis and planning for their classes, it was not clear that teacher team work resulted in progress toward goals for groups of students.

- Other team minutes demonstrate some attention to student data, but also much team time is committed to unpacking curricular programs and sharing of instructional plans, but do not articulate an inquiry process.

- Team records and teacher responses at a separate teacher question and answer session evidenced teacher team work that focused on collaboration and sharing of practices to support English Language Learners and students with disabilities, such as adding academic word boxes and adjusted task sheets and graphic organizers, resulting in growing coherence of teacher practices and teacher reflection on current practices, but not yet improved outcomes for groups of students.

- While teachers do not currently disaggregate data by student groups during team meetings, or track progress toward goals for groups of students, a data-driven instruction team is in place, and is beginning to do this work. At the time of the review, they were still in training, and had only met a few times.