Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 089 Cypress Hills
K-8 19K089
265 Warwick Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207

Principal: Irene Leon

Dates of Review:
February 7, 2018 - February 8, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Robin Posner
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

<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>Area of Focus</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 Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
</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>Area of Celebration</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: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

All teachers are engaged in teams that consistently analyze student work in cycles of inquiry that target areas of student need and actively address them in their work toward fulfilling the school’s goals. Teachers positively affect student learning through service as grade-team leaders as well as the open-door policy in bringing ideas for initiatives and professional development to school leaders.

Impact

Collaborations within grade teams and the vertical inquiry team have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity while data reveals increases in student achievement. Across the school and within a variety of team structures, teacher leadership is embedded and teachers play an integral role in decisions affecting student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers take part in grade level teams in which teachers analyze lessons, co-plan instruction, analyze student work samples, and conduct intervisitations. Teachers reported improvements they were able to make to their instructional practices as a result of these intervisitations. One teacher spoke about delving into the changes that she needed to make in her practice and her classroom. She reported that she is using different types of groupings and scaffolding and her students have evidenced improvement. Another teacher reported that teacher feedback has created a culture of collegiality that has led to a common vision across the grades. Review of other team minutes and agendas evidences that teams use a protocol to review student work and assessment data, make adjustments to their curriculum and track student success toward goals. For example, the English Language Arts (ELA) team reviewed writing work from a group of English Language Learners (ELLs). Using a note taker, the group wrote down warm and cool feedback that was later shared out. A teacher shared her reflection of the feedback and then the group brainstormed together three possible mini-lessons for next steps. A later agenda shows the teacher sharing out how the three mini-lessons worked and sharing evidence of progress on an on-demand writing piece from the same group of students.

- Teachers play a vital role in school-level decision-making. Teachers lead the teams they participate in, both grade-level and vertical teams. The team leader collaborates with his or her colleagues to set the agenda, find additional resources and assign next steps. Teachers have a voice with instructional initiatives and work with administration to come up with the focus for the various inquiry teams including grade level teams, ELA, and math teams as well as other content area teams. Teachers design professional development and cycles of support, serve as model teachers, and lead intervisitations. Teachers have the opportunity to work with outside coaches and come back and turnkey coach colleagues. During the summer professional institute teacher leaders come together and design curriculum for use in the school.

- Teachers also serve on professional learning communities (PLCs). Each PLC is focused on professional development, school improvement, summer learning institute, or dual language instruction. During PLC meetings, teachers analyze data such as assessments, unit and lesson plans, as well as professional development (PD) offerings and the results of intervisitations as steps within their respective cycles of inquiry in assessing the success of their initiatives and modifying next steps accordingly. Teachers lead these PLCs and they have become a model for other dual language programs throughout the city. As a result, teachers from other schools come to visit and take part. This has built the capacity of teachers as facilitators and created a culture of leaders that extends throughout the school.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices, such as small group instruction and peer conferencing, are aligned to the curriculum. Although teachers use scaffolded worksheets, tasks, and activities to provide multiple entry points, there was limited evidence of high quality supports, scaffolds, and extensions for all learners.

Impact

Some missed opportunities for student to student discussions and lack of high quality supports prevents high levels of engagement and the consistent demonstration of thinking through the production of meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflected the school’s belief that students learn best when they are placed in small groups that have been purposefully designed. In a grade four math lesson, each of three groups was designed based on assessment data. Each group was designed to annotate differentiated math problems. In a grade eight ELA lesson, students were paired or tripled based upon common assessment data. All pairs had checklists to provide feedback on if their partner included factual details in their poem. Along with the checklist was a graphic organizer for the writer to jot down notes and differentiated resources designed to help students complete the organizer. However, this level of support was not evident in all classrooms visited. In a grade one classroom, students worked on the same writing assignment. Students did not break into groups to complete this assignment. In a grade five classroom, students all worked independently on the same worksheet with no conversation or collaboration with peers working at their table.

- Across most classrooms, students were engaged and conducted targeted turn-and-talk conversations with partners to further their learning. In a grade five ELA lesson, students were directed to turn and talk about their opinion of why a particular strategy was helpful. In a grade four math lesson, students conducted turn-and-talk conversations around the steps they took the previous day to decompose fractions. However, in a grade five math lesson students were asked to jot down noticings and wonderings about using equivalent fractions to create mathematical questions but were not given an opportunity to share out their findings with the class or build upon other student responses.

- Multiple entry points allowed learners access to the material. In a grade four math lesson on fractions, differentiated supports such as visuals on the whiteboard, manipulatives and toolkits were made available for each student group. In a grade eight humanities lesson on using text-based details in poetry, each table group had scaffolded readings that students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, were to use. However, this was not evident in all classrooms visited. In a grade one classroom, all students were assigned to write about a text without any scaffolds or differentiation provided. In a grade three math lesson, students were all given the same problem to solve, along with the same extension activity leading to not all learners being engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are coherent and are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact
Coherent curricula promote college and career readiness for all students and consistently emphasize higher-order skills for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula calendars across grades and subjects are constructed using the Common Core Learning Standards aligned to ReadyGen and the EngageNY programs. The school also ensures curricular coherence with the New York City (NYC) Social Studies scope and sequence and the New York State (NYS) Science Standards. School leaders and teachers took the ELA and math modules and examined it to see if it was aligned not only to the Common Core, but to the dual language curriculum that is taught in the school. Teachers met in vertical teams to ensure there was coherence and a scaffolding of skills from kindergarten through eighth grade and in grade-level horizontal teams to ensure the needs of students at each grade level were being met. As a result, leaders and teachers integrated number talks and number strings to ensure this vertical and horizontal alignment of math and incorporated ReadyGen because of the integration of fiction and non-fiction texts.

- Evidence shows multiple examples of the infusion of instructional shifts in curricular documents. In a grade one ELA task, students are to use close reading strategies while reading one of two different stories and include two pieces of textual evidence to support their summaries. A grade four math lesson included activities designed to build and support students’ fluency with adding and subtracting fractions. Grade five math unit plans show evidence of deep understanding with a focus on understanding a strategy for a math concept before moving on to create a toolbox of strategies for students.

- A diversity of learners benefit from consistent emphasis on rigorous tasks and higher-order skills. In a grade eight ELA plan, students write an analysis essay explaining the significance of a novel’s title and its relationship to universal refugees. This work is supported by heterogeneous student groupings and uses graphic organizers and teacher support differentiated based upon individual student need. A grade three lesson plan has student groups analyzing different methods for gathering and representing data. Students will then take a gallery walk to examine the different strategies and answer guiding questions about the different strategies that include “What is the best strategy and why?” ELL students and students with disabilities were given sentence starters like, “in my opinion…” and “I believe that…because…” to help them complete the task thus providing access for all learners.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and grading policies aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments like Writing Pathways and the Performance series to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Students receive actionable feedback regarding their achievement. Data from common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. Feedback consistently reminds students to refer to research conducted and textual evidence to support claims. Some examples of that feedback were “You made some minor calculation errors. Be sure to check your work two ways,” and “Be sure to use more transitions words/phrases and include more details in your conclusion.” One student said, “The teacher writes comments on how I can improve on every draft. I use them to rewrite everything.” Feedback from teachers in dual language classes is written in both English and Spanish. A review of student work showed students implementing this feedback.

- Teachers and students use rubrics as assessment tools and feedback mechanisms. Teachers create rubrics across subject areas with student-friendly language when planning their units, keeping in mind the key standards that are being addressed and the criteria students need to show for mastery. Students also use common self-assessment checklists on topics such as peer editing, planning, revising, informative writing, and opinion writing. Additionally, rubrics are attached to work in student portfolios as well as displayed on bulletin boards in hallways and in classrooms. One student reported and all present students agreed, “I always check the rubric for what I have to do to get a level four and then I try to do it.”

- Across the school, teachers analyze the data resulting from the state math and ELA exams along with the various assessments aligned to the curriculum. Teachers use the results to create student groups for math, reading, and writing as well as to identify students for intervention. Student groups change throughout the year based on changing trends. As a result of analysis of math data, teachers found that students in grades three through five were struggling with low-floor high-ceiling tasks. Teachers are individually exploring different strategies and games to implement across the school in order to address these concerns, including the use of a protocol for talking about math problems to ensure understanding of those problems before students attempt to solve them.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through a faculty handbook, memoranda and frequent walkthroughs. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness to partner with families.

Impact

Consistent communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Families understand student progress towards college and career readiness and play an active role in supporting their students to meet those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Additionally, teachers have access to a school handbook, a shared Google file that contains memos, receive weekly emails and memos that cover a wide variety of expectations ranging from day-to-day professional conduct as well as guidelines for instructional planning. The value of increasing the rigor of questioning, ensuring that authentic student conversations are taking place, as well as ensuring the alignment of curriculum to the Common Core are all emphasized. Teachers are engaged in professional learning around the high expectations. Leaders and teachers shared that meetings to discuss mutual accountability towards meeting school and individual goals are ongoing. Teachers and leaders both spoke to the understanding that there is a mutual accountability in place and that together they are responsible for their professional responsibilities and for providing the scaffolding and supports needed to get the job done for the students. A teacher stated, “We work as a team to provide professional development and support to each other, including school leaders, to ensure we are all always on the same page about what we are doing to support success for our students.”

- Feedback on Advance observations reveals high expectations for teacher practice, even when teachers are receiving highly effective and effective ratings. For example, a teacher rated as effective in planning and preparation was given feedback on ensuring lesson plans contained the names of students that would be conferenced with. Another teacher rated as effective in student engagement was given feedback on how to further ensure student engagement with a text during annotation activities. The feedback is time-bound and specific and shows that leaders will look for improvement in these areas the next time they visit. Professional learning workshops are based upon the needs that teachers have shared or on commonalities leaders have noted during formal and informal observations that need more attention. Topics have included focus on domain three of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core on engaging students in learning, as well as on strategies for fostering academic conversations. Teachers shared that the ongoing feedback from leaders is thoughtful, relevant and specific and can be put into practice immediately. Teachers also like the practice of pointing out areas of improvement as well. A teacher stated, “Just like for students, it is very motivating for me as an adult learner to be noticed for implementing suggestions and showing improvement in an area I was struggling with.”

- Newsletters to parents include monthly calendars containing information as to events, class trips, parent-teacher association meetings, as well as workshops for parents. Some recent parent workshops include topics such as wellness, financial literacy, college awareness and a family trip to the New York Hall of Science. Parents praised the school’s communication of student progress through parent engagement time, and other web-based platforms that provide daily updates and feedback. Parents shared that most teachers send home student work with feedback and next steps so parents know exactly where their children are and what they need to do to support their students at home. Families shared that there is an expectation of students going on to competitive high schools and to college and this is shared beginning in kindergarten. There are many trips for students and families to middle schools, high schools and colleges.
**Additional Finding**

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Well Developed |

**Findings**

School leaders and teacher peers strategically use effective feedback and next steps from classroom observations to support teacher development. Clear expectations and feedback to teachers are constructed using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

**Impact**

Consistent and focused feedback from observations and Cycle of Support promote the development of teachers and elevates instructional practices. Feedback is aligned with teachers' professional goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations that have been strategically planned so that each leader has a grade-band focus. School leaders conduct pre- and post-observation conferences beginning with a baseline round of observations at the beginning of the school year. School leaders and teachers examine data as part of the observation cycle and use it to track teacher progress towards meeting school and personal goals. Feedback to teachers is often time-bound and accurately captures their strengths and weaknesses and details next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, supporting the goal that teachers increase the level of student conversations in their classrooms. For example, one observation report advises the teacher to use the Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* to provide questions that help students think and understand critically. Another teacher was given feedback on ensuring that all students were observed engaging in peer-to-peer conversations. Teachers shared that feedback always aligns to their professional goals and supports them in meeting their goals prior to the end of the school year.

- After observations and based on needs, teachers are supported through a schoolwide protocol called Cycles of Support, where collaborative planning and lesson implementation is aided with the support of an in-house coach or consultant. During the Cycles of Support, coaches and teachers team up to set clear instructional goals based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and monitor progress towards goals through meetings and observations. A grade six teacher was supported via a Cycle of Support in engagement and assessment. Observation notes and feedback included strategies and mechanisms for eliciting responses from students. At the end of the Cycle of Support, the teacher was implementing several of the strategies including turn and talk, note taking, and students sharing out and building upon each other’s answers.

- In addition, there are multiple examples of observation reports that reinforce feedback offered in earlier observation reports. For example, one observation report includes feedback that the co-teachers need to be more strategic about the implementation of their lessons and the roles of each teacher. A subsequent report noted that the teachers were successfully implementing more effective co-teaching strategies. In another sample observation report, a teacher is advised to actively monitor student behaviors using only one or two strategies to be more effective. A follow-up observation indicated that the teacher had implemented this successfully. One teacher reported growth in her ability to regroup students, as a direct result of the principal's suggestion that she take notes to monitor students during class.

- Teachers and leaders shared that teachers meet with the leadership team in the beginning of the school year to create their goals for the year. They review their *Advance* data from the previous year, their class data, school data, and schoolwide goals. They have high expectations for themselves in order to meet school goals and impact student learning. Teacher goals included attending more out of school professional learning to expand their toolbox, more interactions with parents, and greater use of the interactive white board. Teachers and leaders shared that the goals are revisited throughout the year and progress towards meeting goals is tracked, discussed and adjusted as necessary. A review of *Advance* data indicates teacher growth in areas that match school goals, including student engagement.