Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. K140
K-8 75K140
141 Macon Street
Brooklyn
NY 11216

Principal: Roderick Palton

Dates of Review:
February 8, 2018 - February 9, 2018

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. K140 serves students in grade K 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>To what extent does the school...</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
Regularly scheduled meeting times, including Collaborative Teacher Team Meetings (CTTM) and Speech Instructional Rounds, provide substantial time for teachers to focus on instructional work and the school’s goals. Staff assignments and student program groupings are strategic.

Impact
Organizational decisions result in improved instruction and ensure that students engage in individualized, challenging academic tasks. Groups of staff hold each other mutually accountable for student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School staff, including teachers and related service providers, such as speech, occupational, physical therapists, and English as a New Language (ENL) providers have programs that provide regular, weekly time to meet in Collaborative Teacher Teams to address the specific functional needs of the school's students, all of whom are students with disabilities. During their meetings, teams refine curricula and performance tasks to provide individualized instruction for students, and ensure that students are able to choose challenging and rigorous tasks. The school schedule provides teachers of the same grade, or same student groups, such as students with autism spectrum disorders, emotional challenges, or cognitive delays who receive similar service delivery models to have common preparation periods. The school staff participates in weekly grade level meetings to discuss student and teacher successes and challenges and to analyze formal, and informal assessments to determine student progress toward IEP goals. In these meetings, teachers and service providers hold one another accountable for their students’ progress. As two of the school goals for the year focus on the creation of performance tasks and assessment of student learning, the school leaders provide school staff with full or half-day coverage to create end of unit performance tasks for various teams. This resulted in the production of challenging student work, which was observed during classroom visits, and in student work samples.

- New this year, the school holds monthly “Speech Instructional Rounds” where speech, occupational and physical therapists meet for the day, and classroom teachers receive coverage to meet with the team. Teachers and providers compare student successes and the challenges they face with the use of their communication device across settings, and determine next steps for promoting student communication and independence. These actions underscore their holding themselves mutually accountable for student progress in communication, whether orally, in writing, or using a communication device. Teachers also use this collaborative time to track progress of IEP goals, evaluate students' present levels of performance, and create adaptations to meet student-learning needs, furthering mutual accountability amongst the staff in ensuring their students’ progress.

- School leaders hire new teachers through the lens of the prospective teacher’s understanding and training in supporting social-emotional development in students. The school leaders look for teachers with expertise in specific programs and curricula that the school uses to promote positive behaviors in students, aligned with their IEP goals. In response to student data, the school leader strategically hires staff with content area expertise for the middle grades, where students take departmentalized classes to prepare for the transitions and independence required in District 75 and community high schools. To this end, the school has strategically hired new social studies, math and social emotional learning teachers.
Findings
While most teachers receive frequent observations, feedback to teachers is not always effective, or does not always capture strengths and clear next steps. School leaders are beginning to facilitate professional learning and develop succession plans based on observations.

Impact
Feedback to teachers is beginning to support teacher development but as yet does not articulate clear expectations for teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- During teacher meetings teachers shared differing opinions about the usefulness of the feedback given to them by school leaders following classroom observations. One teacher explained that the feedback they have received from their administrator this year was helpful, and included specific next steps to help them improve the level of student engagement in classroom discussions. Other teachers expressed that the feedback they receive is not helpful. One teacher shared, and others agreed, that there is often a discrepancy between the oral and written feedback they receive, making it unclear what the expectations are, or the next steps that should be undertaken. Inconsistencies surfaced in the timeliness of feedback given to teachers. Some felt they had too little time to implement new strategies before the administrator returned to observe them. Others expressed that too much time passed before they received feedback diminishing its usefulness.

- Approximately one quarter of the staff of the school's teachers had received one observation, limiting opportunities for teachers to reflect on their instructional practices. In one observation report, a teacher received four ineffective ratings in October. This was the teacher’s only feedback for the current year, hindering ongoing professional growth. Observation reports reviewed from different administrators revealed inconsistencies in the feedback addressing teacher strengths, as well as the clarity of next steps. In one report, the glow highlighted the teacher’s assessing each student and checking the work they were producing. In another, the teacher’s strength read, “You have a wonderful presence when talking to the children.” In some reports teacher’s strengths were not addressed. Some contained feedback that is prioritized, focusing on one or two next steps, such as suggesting that the teacher provide students with a self-assessment checklist. Other reports included four or five next steps, but lacked a strategy or suggestion for the teacher to implement. Next steps were seldom time-bound, making them less effective.

- Professional learning sessions that teachers attend are often connected to the school leader’s and district’s expectations, particularly for developing IEPs and providing positive behavior supports for students. Teachers often self-select professional learning sessions outside of school that align to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, however, at this time, professional learning is not consistently and effectively designed using observation data. While new staff receives training on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, other staff shared that they have less opportunities to learn about the rubric. As one teacher shared, “There is so much anxiety with the process. We have had a lack of explaining what you have been graded on.”

- School leaders are beginning to develop a system for succession planning based on observation data. School leaders encouraged three teachers to enroll in school leadership programs, with a goal of at least five teachers to be enrolled by next year. Succession planning also includes paraprofessionals, some of whom participate in a “Para-to-Teacher” support group to help them achieve the next level of their professional career.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

Rigorous tasks and skills are embedded in lesson plans and provide individualized access for all students. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student data and IEP goals.

Impact

The school’s curricula are refined and accessible so that all students are cognitively engaged and must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subject areas, lesson plans emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills such as understanding the organization and structure of print, using text-based evidence, and problem solving. Plans include objectives and tasks that ensure students with autism or other developmental disabilities practice skills connected to language development, self-help, and motor skills, connected to their IEP goals. In a lesson plan for kindergarten and first grade students, tasks for students involved learners representing a number of objects with a written numeral, and numbering in standard order. Additionally, learning that was targeted included students following directions and following picture cues to self-select tasks. An eighth grade lesson addressing *The Diary of Anne Frank* asked students to work in groups to read, or have the text read aloud, discuss the characters, and then as a group form a claim about the character’s traits and motivations. They were to use textual evidence to back their claims. The plan also indicated individualized goals for students, such as attending to their on task checklist or speaking up in the group discussion. A competitive review game at the end of the lesson promoted students’ cognitive engagement and motivated them to share their thinking.

- Lesson plans consistently include “I can” statements as instructional objectives in student-friendly language across the grades and subjects. In some lesson plans, these “I can” statements are tailored for individual learners based on the task and the student’s IEP goals. In a third grade math lesson, pre-planned questions, such as, “What does the key tell us?” and “What is the most important thing to look at on a picture graph?” were included in the plan to ensure that students demonstrated their thinking either verbally, or through selecting pictures. In addition to providing for different answer formats based on students’ communication style and goals, there was planning for the use of number lines and one-on-one assistance for specific students. This refinement allowed all students, including the lowest and highest achieving to have access and be cognitively engaged. Purposeful grouping and supports for individual students including breaking down multi-step problems for some learners, planning for independence, or providing partial or full prompts by adults or peers were consistently evident in all plans.

- Across all subjects, tasks from the NYCDOE approved Core Curricula are recreated to align to the IEP goals of students, including those learners who take alternative assessments. For example, an English Language Arts (ELA) unit on decision-making includes a task where students are asked to write a narrative about a character that makes a decision about money. In addition to the task included in the curricula, teachers created a more structured task which provided steps for the students to follow, such as creating a sequence of events, including the events and transition words to support those specific students and still meet the standard of the grade. Similarly, a fourth grade science unit’s culminating task addressing how electricity travels in a closed circuit was refined to have students either produce a lab report, or create and label a model, thus ensuring that all students demonstrate their thinking.
Findings
Across classes, teacher pedagogy aligns to the “The 4 CORE” beliefs that students learn best when teachers model, differentiate to provide students with access, provide students with choice and teach perseverance.

Impact
Teaching practices, scaffolds and supports enable students to produce meaningful work products and demonstrate higher-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teacher practices align to the school's four core beliefs, that students learn best when the teacher or paraprofessional model, differentiate to provide students with access, provide students with choice and incorporate their interests, and teach practice and perseverance. In a middle grade ELA class, the teacher modeled at the front of the room by looking at the text, thinking aloud, and adding text evidence to the model story elements chart. Students then worked in small groups. They were provided with scaffolds including sentence pieces to be put together in order, or taken apart, picture stories and prompts, or blank story element charts to be completed. Students discussed what they knew about the story elements. One student shared, “I’m getting back on task,” and the teacher praised the student for “turning a bad decision into a good one.” This attention to the school’s four core beliefs in instruction was common across classrooms.

- In many classes, students worked in small groups on differentiated tasks with appropriate manipulatives and reading supports such as chunked passages and anchor charts. Discussion took place and allowed them to share each other's thinking. In an upper grade math class, students worked at differentiated stations to apply the concept of inverse operations to solve equations. As students worked through the problems, a few students referred to an anchor chart that helped them to recall the inverse of operations, and check their own understanding. In a social studies lesson on cardinal direction, the teacher put the cardinal directions on charts on the floor and had students move together around the room as she called out the directions and modeled the direction. The teacher paused frequently to let students check in with one another about which direction they thought they were moving as they worked to understand cardinal direction. In another math class, the teacher modeled finding factors of prime and composite numbers, and had students practice with dry erase markers on their desks making it easy for students to understand and see how others were reaching their solutions. Students were given the opportunity to use counters if they wanted to, giving students choice and any necessary support to demonstrate their thinking.

- In one classroom, serving students with autism spectrum disorders, students worked independently with routines and prompts of high quality that allowed students without direct support from teachers or paraprofessionals to demonstrate high levels of thinking. Stations were set up for student independence, and students had work boards with tasks to be completed during the period. Students matched pictures representing tasks to ordered activities. These task boards and pre-set station areas allowed students to express their thinking when matching letters to objects, organizing objects of similar colors together, or matching animals to their environments on their own. In some cases, students were able to set up the learning activity, and put it back on the shelf by themselves demonstrating high levels of learning.
Findings

The vast majority of teachers creates and uses assessments and rubrics to create student portfolios that offer a clear portrait of student mastery and achievement of IEP goals. Ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment checklists are used throughout classrooms.

Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback enables teachers and students to understand student achievement and provides key information so that students work with independence, and are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, student portfolios for each learner contained student work samples, such as teacher created assessments and tasks with actionable feedback. Across the school sites, the portfolios systematically articulated a clear portrait of student mastery of Common Core standards, and the student's IEP goals, usually with a notation of the level of independence, which the student demonstrated. Student work is consistently graded utilizing a rubric. A score of one through four is assigned with a one meaning that the student is a novice, and a four marking expertise. The content of the rubric changes with the task, and includes Common Core aligned skills such as identifying how a character changes during a story. How much prompting or redirection the student needed to complete the task is indicated as well. Portfolios routinely include student progress on IEP goals related to the task, such as selecting a preferred topic from a choice of three, the student's success, and what supports were provided. At a student meeting, a student shared that they use what is in their portfolios to talk about their annual goals, and the things that help them learn better at their IEP meetings, demonstrating the meaningfulness of the feedback given by teachers and paraprofessionals.

- At meetings with students, all students brought work from various subject areas evidencing rubrics, and were able to discuss, or demonstrate with a communication device the feedback provided by the teacher. One student shared feedback from a personal narrative, and expanded that the teacher’s suggestion to use more descriptive language and more of the unit’s vocabulary words was something he always tries to do now in his writing regardless of the topic. Student portfolios included student self-reflections, including student checklists, grades, and written reflections about what the student did well and what they could have done differently. Students addressed academics and their level of independence thus, demonstrating self-assessment and awareness of next learning steps.

- Across classes, teachers and paraprofessionals routinely checked for student understanding, and the ability of students to work with independence, or collaboration, depending on their goals, and used data collection sheets to record student thinking. Additionally, they keep track to inform future adjustments to the instruction, scaffolds and supports used in learning. In a science lesson, teachers and paraprofessionals used individualized student sheets indicating the content objectives to record whether the student responds non-verbally, verbally with intention, randomly, or whether the student could work with independence. Educators also noted the adaptations used, such as communication pictures, or reading templates. As students worked, educators often shared their recordings with the students to praise them or to offer guidance. Student checklists supported student awareness of their next learning steps.
**Finding**

The vast majority of teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based collaborations in Collaborative Teacher Team Meetings (CTTM) that support school goals. Systematic analysis of assessment data, student work, and the practices of teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers take place during team meetings.

**Impact**

Teacher and related service provider collaborations result in schoolwide coherence, improvements in teacher practice, and increased student achievement for all learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The vast majority of teachers engage in structured inquiry in weekly CTTMs. A review of notes from several team meetings demonstrates a consistency in practices and structure, particularly in the teams’ focus on a particular school goal and connecting their work to the Common Core. During an elementary grade teacher meeting the work focused on strategies that would increase reading comprehension for a targeted group of students. This focus on reading comprehension connects to the school’s District 75 Learning Partner’s Program goal of increasing reading comprehension by 3 percent using the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS). Notes from other teams reflected a similar focus on school goals connected to improving student writing in ELA or math, aligned with the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals. A review of minutes from team meetings reveals teachers looking at student work for targeted groups of students, reflecting on Common Core shifts, particularly using text-based evidence and a focus on foundational knowledge in math. Recent data indicates increased student achievement for learners, particularly in reading.

- During a meeting, a teacher presented student work for her targeted students. The team including the related service providers used a protocol to make observations about student thinking, and student improvement. Possible next steps were discussed for specific students. In the review of student work, teachers discussed tasks, which were created for individual learners at a previous team meeting. Tasks included provisions for some students to write on their own, others to cut and paste, and some to have assistance from their paraprofessional in completing the task. Teachers looked at student work samples before these new strategies were tried, and made note of increases in student achievement for all of the students whose work was reviewed. Teachers also discussed prompt fading strategies that they had all tried after engaging in a shared reading from a scholarly journal and shared their new insights and student achievement outcomes.

- In a separate question and answer session, teachers and related service providers explained the spiraled inquiry approach observed in the teacher team meeting. The protocol includes the teacher or related service provider presenting student work from their targeted group followed by the staff planning, observing and noting student progress over time. This inquiry approach is typical across teams. Teachers and school leaders were able to share data sheets from team binders that demonstrated increases in student achievement and mastery toward goals for targeted groups of students. Data also demonstrated increases in reading levels for all students over the past two years. While growth was slower for students in math, there were increases in student math performance as well.