Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S./I.S. 155 Nicholas Herkimer
K-8 23K155
1355 Herkimer Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Michelle Manns

Dates of Review:
January 11, 2018 - January 12, 2018

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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./I.S. 155 Nicholas Herkimer serves students in grade PK 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>
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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>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>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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and include rigorous habits, higher-order skills, and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Curricula are accessible to all students to build coherence and promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Lessons are designed to support a gradual release model, where students experience whole group instruction led by the teacher, then engage in collaborative work before completing independent work. The gradual release model is also referred to as "I do, we do, you do." One grade seven-lesson plan requires students to identify the challenges and survival factors that two eleven year old children face in Sudan. The teacher will model two examples, including the challenge of not having clean water nearby which is necessary for survival. Once the examples are provided, students will work in groups to provide an additional two examples before students work independently to identify another example. Similarly, the objective for a kindergarten lesson is for students to describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear. The teacher will read the book aloud and ask all students questions using evidence from the words and pictures in the text. Then, pairs of students will choose one spread of pages to describe the relationship between the words and picture before using what they learned to write or dictate what happened in school that day.

- A grade six-math lesson included station teaching to support students’ understanding of positive and negative numbers on a number line. The math instructional shifts were embedded at each station. Station one tasked students to choose a fluency activity depending on their math needs to gain speed and accuracy with simple calculations. Station two tasked students to problem solve a given set of problems using the strategies incorporated into their worksheet. Station three consists of interactive games requiring math applications to help deepen understanding. Station four required use of prior knowledge to solve problems. Additionally, next steps were provided to ensure all students would have access to engage in rigorous thinking when complete. Similar access to rigorous activities integrating the instructional shifts were found in other lesson planning documents such as, a grade four plan designed to aide students in using the number ten as a strategy for subtraction.

- Teachers create scaffolds and multiple entry points to provide appropriate rigor for individual students. For example, a plan for an English as a New Language (ENL) class included a differentiated task requiring students to read informational text and produce an expository essay about the life and contributions of a leader in today’s society. Additionally, students are given choice of the worksheet to use when completing reading comprehension. The worksheets vary to address the needs of students on short-term recall (skim and scan for answers in the reading selection), retelling (organize thoughts sequentially and in students own words), or acquiring knowledge (learn, understand, and remember details to show deeper understanding) by answering specific focus questions. Differentiated tasks, as well as tasks to promote higher-order skills are included in most lesson planning documents across all grades.
Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers with feedback and next steps from observations that capture instructional strengths and challenges specifically designed to address gaps in instruction aligned to the effectiveness of assessment techniques.

Impact

Although cycles of observation are intended to promote professional growth and reflection, the feedback does not clearly articulate clear expectations for teacher practice nor for supporting teacher development.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership stated they “occasionally go into classes informally to highlight positive and negative aspects of instruction, referred to as glows and grows.” They further explained that the grows are expected to be implemented on subsequent lesson plans and in instruction. Additionally, school leaders may take on a coaching stance after observing a teacher whom they think may benefit from a visit to help improve the use of the strategy they observed. School leadership also suggest professional resources such as a books or articles be read to help improve the desired pedagogical strategy. However, it is unclear how the feedback is specific, actionable, or prioritized in its alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- A review of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Teacher Observation Reports reveals a lack of clear expectations to elevate school wide instructional practices connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, an APPR report for a classroom observation identifies the rating for use of assessment in instruction as effective, although “questioning” and “circulating room during lesson” are listed as the only observed evidence with no connection to the impact or effectiveness of the assessment techniques used. However, another APPR report rates a teachers’ effectiveness for engaging students in learning as effective noting, “Students were mostly attentive, many raised their hands to answer questions when posed.” Additional evaluator notes were provided referencing a discussion around preparation to allow for future engagement by altering the amount of time spent on the mini-lesson. As such, feedback is beginning to support teacher development.

- Feedback to promote professional growth and reflection for some teachers lacks specificity, especially when ratings are identified as effective. For example, a teacher who was rated in five of eight criteria as effective was provided the recommendation to “initiate more activities that share your professionalism and expertise with your colleagues so that they may learn from you.” Furthermore, two Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers received the identical observation report, ratings, collected evidence, and suggested next steps for their classroom observation, thus limiting the opportunity for each teacher to receive specific support for their own development.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teaching practices follow the gradual release model and are aligned to the curricula while coherently reflecting how students learn best to engage in their learning and complete their work.

Impact

Students’ discussions reflect high-levels of student thinking and participation leading to meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade six math class, two boys worked together to create their own high-level word problem after the teacher modeled the relationship between positive and negative numbers relative to zero. The boys discussed strategies to demonstrate their understanding and used ten frames to solve it. Simultaneously, other students used counter chips and place mats to solve their assigned equations. All students discussed their thinking with a partner to help them grasp the concept. Once complete, students independently answered the exit ticket to show their understanding of the relationship between numbers on the opposite side of zero using a number line. The gradual release model was observed in the majority of classes, which ensured curricular content is introduced in an engaging and meaningful way that meets their individual learning needs.

- All students in a grade eight math class discussed how to solve several equations using the Pythagorean Theorem. Students discussed and participated in engaging conversations to justify their answers. One group discussed how far the base of a ladder would be from a building if they knew the height of the ladder and where it touched the building. Another group discussed their answers to several word problems and showed their substitutions and drawings to support their answers. During group discussions, several students explained they have to justify their work so “we can work to better improve ourselves.” Similarly, students in a kindergarten class produced meaningful work when they drew and explained their snowy experience and connection to the little boy in A Snowy Day using words, labels, or sentences.

- During a grade four English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the students and teacher engaged in a rich discussion about the characters’ feelings from their fiction reading, Eagle Song. One student explained that the character, Danny, would feel sad since he is bullied because he is a Native American and he has to deal with missing his friends since relocating to Brooklyn. Another student said Danny would feel depressed and many students agreed by giving a thumbs up. The teacher seized the moment to make a personal connection and asked her students who they would go to in the school if they were bullied. Students shared some names of staff and further made connections to the story and character. Another student expressed that since Danny is different than the other boys in the novel, they know nothing about his culture. The teacher iterated the importance to know about others’ culture. Similarly, students in another grade four class discussed the root meaning of the word cycle. Students made connections to the words bicycle and unicycle to explain how cycle means, “you are doing the same thing over and over.” Another boy agreed and added, “Because the wheel goes around, around, and around, and when animals give birth they start their life and when they die, another comes, so it repeats itself again and again.” Several other students added to the groups’ understanding of cycle and used appropriate academic vocabulary, including germination, male, female, and reproduction.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, exit tickets, and common assessments aligned to the curricula to determine student progress via the safe, organized, accountable, and respectful (SOAR) initiative. Assessment practices consistently include ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students regarding their achievement so they are aware of their progress. Additionally, teachers make effective adjustments using common assessment results to adjust curriculum and use checks for understanding to meet students’ learning needs during instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers circulate the classroom during small group and independent work to assess students’ understanding and application of content knowledge as they perform their tasks. During a grade one math lesson, a boy working to understand how ten frames can be used to subtract a single digit number solved one of his problems incorrectly. While circulating the room and assessing student understanding, the teacher efficiently clarified the boys’ misconception before moving onto other students. The boy was able to correctly resolve the problem and move onto the next one accordingly, while demonstrating full understanding. Additionally, the teacher tracked her students on a checklist consisting of the Common Core Learning Standards to redirect instruction or provide additional guidance as needed. The assessment notes memorialized on the checklist are used to group students in subsequent lessons with appropriate tiered activities and entry points, similar to the observed lesson.

- Alphabet awareness record sheets are used by grade two teachers to track students with disabilities’ understanding and recognition of letters and their connection to writing. Teachers inform students of their progress and provide feedback regarding their achievement and progress towards mastery, although mastery may not yet be achieved. Similarly, other teachers track student progress of the Common Core Learning Standards in writing, so students can create their goals. The SOAR goals students create in their classroom are aligned to the school’s curricula, providing them opportunities to improve their knowledge. For example, a grade five student created a goal to improve their understanding of the multiplication table based on actionable feedback they received. Another student established an ELA goal to execute better vocabulary based on written feedback they received on submitted essays.

- Students across all grades receive written feedback and a rubric aligned score of one through four on most assignments to inform them of their next steps. For example, a student shared feedback he received on an essay. It informed him how he “showed grade appropriate analysis of the text, but next steps should include a more compelling conclusion.” Other written feedback included “good effort, you were able to summarize the story, next step is more details are needed.” Students overwhelmingly agree they receive actionable feedback to inform them of their progress and understand when “we get a one out of four, it means we didn’t understand and a four means total understanding with excellent evidence.”

- Feedback is provided to students across all classes during one-on-one conferences while reviewing their submitted and graded work samples. A grade eight student received a three plus on an essay about war and how it affects today’s society. He was able to communicate how he was made aware of the standards “to get a better grade and improve my work,” based on the teachers comments and his own reflection.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate expectations connected to implementation of the gradual release model and creating a safe and respectful learning environment to the entire staff. Additionally, staff has established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations to their students.

**Impact**

The supports and training needed to achieve the high expectations exist for teachers. Additionally, feedback and the guidance provided to students prepares them for the next level of their educational journey.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During morning announcements the staff, and students, are reminded to prepare to “go the extra" and do the “extraordinary." Additionally, staff is provided formal and informal guidance to achieve success with the mission and vision outlined in the instructional focus. School leadership engages in frequent classroom rounds and provides on the spot feedback via brief conversations to the teacher regarding expectations and the design of instruction to ensure vision and mission are realized. Grade six teachers are implementing station teaching and instructional strategies for students to work more independently through their collegial training and shared best practices. Students have improved in their use of unfamiliar words and academic vocabulary because of this instructional focus.

- Professional development is offered to staff to better understand the gradual release model and how to effectively implement during instruction. Videos are provided to demonstrate what it looks like and highlight some guided practice techniques. An English as a New Language (ENL) coordinator supports teachers’ integration and curricular development of activities to meet the needs of all students, especially ELLs. Outside resources are provided to offer explicit instruction and guide practice to improve independent implementation.

- Most students attend the school from kindergarten through grade eight. A college and career readiness curriculum is taught during the advisory period to all students in grade six through eight. Students learn the pertinent skills required to be able to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self. It also provides opportunities to make informed and career based decisions. Students learn how to search information for careers and colleges while also learning about social emotional well being. Several students expressed that they make goals for the whole class as well as for themselves so they understand their goals and only through practice will they achieve them. Students further stated they receive guidance and advisement from staff to achieve their goals and make progress towards the next level of their education.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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</table>

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations where they analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

Although teachers have a protocol to follow when analyzing student work it is used ineffectively. Their inquiry work is developing across teams and does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade four-teacher inquiry meeting focused on an end of unit performance task, teachers read aloud the module lesson in order to understand what information the students were given. The teacher facilitator informed all teachers of the students’ task, which included making connections between the text and themselves. The team of teachers recognized they were not following the protocol accordingly and suggested they stop reading and move on. However, they continued to read the next text. One teacher suggested they move on to collecting evidence while another suggested they review the rubric. Despite having a protocol to follow, teachers verbally expressed to one another elements of the students' writing they liked and did not like. For example, one teacher stated, "I like how he made connections to the real world and I like that his organization is good with introducing the topic and content analysis and what it symbolizes..." Another teacher commented, “he is inconsistent, so his organization would be rated a two, but I am content that he was given a three.” The inconsistent adherence to the protocol made it unclear how all teachers were able to engage in a discussion to improve their teacher practice and promote student learning.

- Teachers explained that the goal of inquiry is to help each other and offer resources that will help close the achievement gap, support students in meeting the standards, and prepare for the next level. They further stated this would be accomplished by identifying the missing pieces needed to reteach. However, it was not evident what those resources would be. There was no evidence suggesting the achievement gap was closing based on their work.

- Reflections from inquiry work are memorialized on tuning protocol documents. Teachers incompletely fill-out warm feedback, cool feedback, reflection from feedback, and the instructional modifications to be made. The accommodations consist of a list printed from a public school in Colorado. Although the list refers to assessment, instructional strategies, study/work aids, classroom organization and management, and access to technology as effective accommodations, it does not offer any clarity regarding how the accommodations will be used. Furthermore, it does not indicate who will provide the accommodations or who will receive them. As such, tuning protocol documents that identify suggestions for instructional modifications to be made do not identify progress towards goals for groups of students or refer to any improvement in teacher practice.