Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 205 Clarion
Elementary 20K205
6701 20 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204

Principal: Beth Grater

Dates of Review:
January 30, 2018 - January 31, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusorio
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. 205 Clarion 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

### Instructional Core

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</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>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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Finding</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>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>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>Proficient</td>
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<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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

**Findings**

The school community strategically develops structures and aligns professional development, family outreach and student learning experiences and supports that are connected to students developing a growth mindset and persevering through challenging tasks.

**Impact**

Personalized student supports, attendance initiatives, and coordination of programs result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

**Supporting Evidence**

- As a result of a successful fourth grade pilot program, school leaders have provided schoolwide professional learning on fostering a growth mindset and mindfulness practices to purposefully support students in completing challenging coursework despite experiencing difficulties. The adoption and development of structures to foster a growth mindset is thoroughly integrated into a variety of structures across the school. Specifically, bulletin boards and other areas contain prompts and quotes to reinforce persistence and resiliency. In one class, a bulletin board contained a quote, “Change your words, change your mindset,” and comparison prompts like, “I give up” to represent a fixed mindset versus “I can always improve. I’ll keep on trying”; prompts that are directly aligned with a growth mindset. In several classes, teachers were observed using this language with students while they were engaged in tasks, further supporting a culture of positive attitudes towards academic growth.

- Collectively, parents reported that the growth mindset approach is a valuable aspect of the school. Parents have received training on the topic to encourage the use of the same type of prompts at home, thus contributing to developing and reinforcing a common language and the mindfulness initiative across the school community. Parents reported that their children have come home and used the language while completing homework. One parent reported that she caught her child saying to herself while discussing a grade, “I can’t get upset about this now and will just have to try it again the next time.” In addition, during an interview, students reported that they use their training from assemblies on growth mindset and activities and books around mindfulness while they are working and faced with a difficulty problem. One student reported that she asks herself at times of difficulty, “Is this really my best work?” Other students responses were similar using phrases such as, "If I work hard, I can do it," and that the language helps them develop goals and “complete work without procrastinating”; fostering a culture of learning.

- A personalized point system and rewards initiative has led to increases in student attendance. Additionally, student support services focus on parent outreach, which have supported the school in meeting its attendance goals each year. The Response to Intervention Team and the Pupil Personnel Team work to review the delivery of student services, starting at the beginning of the school year, to transition students to more least-restrictive environments. As needed, these teams have determined whether particular students are ready for reduction of services and then support parents in making informed class placement and student service decisions using data based on the teams’ collective review. Across one and a half school years, thirteen percent of students with disabilities have had a reduction of services which reflects a shared belief in the initiation, administration, and follow-up of structures that increase student academic and personal growth.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teaching strategies have yet to strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions aligned to project-based learning approaches as reflected in student work, small group instruction, and discussions.

Impact

Although students are fully engaged, student work and discussions have yet to reflect higher-order thinking and ownership in some classes.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classes, project-based learning tasks provided opportunities for student-to-student ownership. In a second grade science class, students working in partnerships were building model shelters illustrating how their created design could withstand wind and rain. In one partnership, the students wondered what would protect their roof, created with wooden sticks, from the rain. They stated that they were afraid that water would seep inside. The partnership stated that they first tried covering it with tape and playdough, but it was too heavy for the structure and therefore, worked to use aluminum as a cover as it was lighter. Another partnership revised their design from a round base to a square one to ensure the structures would not fall over. However, this level of ownership was prevalent in only a few classes.

- In a fourth grade social studies class, groups presented their interpretation of Native American photos containing different scenes. In review of one group’s notebooks, students’ interpreted their photo as positive since it showed that the people were engaged in trade with the Europeans. Based on another photo, one group interpreted a negative interaction and wrote that it was unfair as the Europeans had the benefit of winning as the actions in the picture reflected fighting with the Native Americans who did not have similar weapons. Although students were provided with opportunities to share their thinking as a group, the majority of the session was directed by the teacher. Similarly, in a kindergarten math class, the teacher primarily directed the counting activity where students moved back and forth to determine and predict numbers.

- In an Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) English Language Arts (ELA) class, groups of students worked with the support of a teacher or paraprofessional who used prompts to support them in determining the main idea from a text and producing a comparative informational essay. In one group, the ENL teacher provided students with sentence stems to help them add details using their notetaking tool and a graphic organizer to assist them in determining the main idea for their second body paragraph. A review of graphic organizers contained student writing using these transitional sentence stems and the use of details from the text. However, overall, not all student work products reflected the use of these critical thinking skills. Similarly, in a fourth grade ELA class, to assist with the interpretation of a text, the ENL teacher used graphic organizers and prompts to aid a small group with understanding the author’s point of view. However, in other groups, although engaged in a task with one another, one group of students demonstrated difficulty in determining the meaning of the word astonishing and continued with the task without correction from their teacher or each other. Another group demonstrated difficulty with interpreting the point of view and key vocabulary.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are utilizing curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards which integrate vocabulary, close reading, and argumentative writing. Teachers use formative and summative data in ELA and math to plan units and refine instructional tasks.

Impact

Consistent analysis of student work and data leads to tasks that provide access for and cognitively engage diverse learners in the curricula, build coherence, and promote post-secondary readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff have purposely chosen specific standards-based programs to focus on specific instructional shifts across the school. In ELA, the teacher-created curricula contains close reading protocols and strategies integrating the text complexity shift. Specifically, a first-grade lesson plan in ELA and upper-grade unit maps highlight these strategies. Additionally, in both lower and upper-grade curricula maps, learning objectives, procedures, and activities for several units integrate standards and instructional shifts on developing claims and supporting them with evidence from the text. In a fourth grade unit map on responding to literature using an author study, citing evidence to support one point of view over another is a key learning objective. Similar connections of these instructional shifts are reflected in social studies tasks where students are asked to cite evidence from texts. In a fourth grade lesson plan, the assignment requires students to develop a point of view based on picture cards, use multiple texts to formulate an opinion and cite evidence in support. A second grade science lesson plan reflects a task which asks students to develop a hypothesis about an experiment they conducted, determine whether or not their design met the criteria requirement and list any constraints.

- A review of math curricula reflects tasks which incorporate the instructional shift of fluency and a domain-specific vocabulary focus. In a fifth grade math lesson plan, the procedure includes previewing words like double bar graph, grid, and key. A first grade lesson plan reflects a tasks where students are to connect color cubes to create a tower of ten. A review of unit and pacing calendars across grades reflect similar patterns which emphasize skills such as estimation and place value, and as a focus for the upper grades, multiplication, and division.

- A review of lesson plans across grades reflects that teachers adjust instruction for students who are performing below-, on- and above-grade level standards. In a fifth grade word-study lesson plan, the tasks differ by ability level where students who are performing below-grade level work in a small group on understanding the meaning of idioms using pictures while the task for advanced students has them using scenario-based task cards to name the idiom and explain how it relates to the situation. Similarly in a fifth-grade math lesson plan, the task differs for advance students requiring them to work independently on interpreting graphs and answering a combination of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge level two and three questions while other groups are working in a group to answer a separate set of tiered questions and using other tools for support.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school’s curricula and national standards. Consistent in-the-moment classroom assessment practices reflect checks for understanding and self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback and effective in-the-moment classroom adjustments ensure students’ learning needs are met in order to increase their academic achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, students work on personal reading and math goals based on feedback provided by their teachers. During an interview, students reported that they were aware of their next steps based on the rubric scores using performance levels from one to four. One student reported that in order to improve her writing, she needed to work on listing details and linking ideas based on categories. The student shared that her teacher stated she should stop, think and jot while reading in order to help find the link between the details. Similarly, others students shared strategies that would support their next steps to improve the quality of their work.

- In a fifth grade music class students used a guitar or piano to play a set of musical notes. In one group, students graded the performance of another student using a checklist. During the feedback session, some students stated that he needed to work on clarity of chords and notes to ensure the tone was clear. The student used the rubric and his peers' feedback to self-assess his attempt before trying again. In another group, the students provided lyrical feedback to another group member. One student stated, “you need to work on your pitch when singing and raise your voice.” Collectively, in both cases, peer feedback and self-assessment practices assisted in the revision of an in-the-moment response to a task.

- In a fifth grade math class, students worked in small groups to interpret the meaning of double bar graphs. In one group, the teacher used questioning and prompting to clarify a word problem which required students to use the graph to answer questions. In another math class, while attempting to count numbers up to twenty, a student could not recall the number nine after being asked what comes after eight. The teacher used prompts to assist the student while she recounted to ensure she was able to identify the number. Similar practices using questioning and conferring were prevalent across classes.

- In a fifth-grade word-study class, groups of students interpreted the meaning of a set of idioms and used iPad software to self-assess and determine whether they were correct with their responses. Before checking, students had to explain to others the meaning and how it was determined. One group stated that “A penny for your thoughts” means “I want to know what you are thinking. I don’t literally want a penny for every thought.” At times, as needed the teacher intervened to aid in student corrections when misconceptions occurred, which was a practice consistently viewed in meeting student learning needs across classes.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and staff communicate high expectations using multiple ongoing support structures to provide parents with feedback about their children's progress and they establish a learning culture for students based upon research-based practices that is aligned to the standards.

Impact
Parents are aware of and understand their children’s progress towards schoolwide expectations. Students are provided with ongoing feedback and support to prepare for their next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that the school consistently uses online messaging systems, translated newsletters, and class websites to message policies and expectations to families throughout the year. A fourth grade newsletter provides information on the upcoming genres in ELA and authors being selected to study. In math, fourth grade is focused on fractions and teachers ask parents to reinforce multiplication and division tables each evening. Curriculum night and parent workshops on using E-books, and using online reading programs help them to further support their children at home. Additionally, parents reported the benefit of participating in open school week activities, which help them understand the types of tasks their children are engaged in and how to further support their academic growth.

- There are a variety of ways the school shares the progress of students to parents to make them aware of how their children’s performance compares to the expectations of the standards at each grade-level. Parents shared that between phone calls, texts, emails and tests sent home, many are aware of how their children are performing. Additionally, parents have access to online grading systems which contain student grades. Parents provided anecdotes of how the teachers and other support staff have helped them support their children. One parent stated that after meeting with the teacher and a service provider regarding her child’s writing skills, she was able to use the same strategies at home to reinforce what they were teaching her daughter at school, resulting in progress.

- Teachers use research approaches in classrooms such as notefacts, a notetaking strategy, to help students organize and categorize their ideas to learn how to paraphrase and produce stronger writing. In addition, through partnerships and middle school visitations, exposure to post-elementary opportunities provide students a lens for what is expected in upcoming years. One student shared that the middle school she is interested in has a law and business program and therefore she needs to focus on how to write details in her essays so she is prepared for the program expectations. To assist students in meeting expectations students set standards-based goals and work with their teachers and other staff to determine whether they are meeting those expectations and to develop steps for next-level readiness.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based grade-level and vertical content teams where formative and summative data and work products are analyzed to determine trends for selected subgroups of students.

Impact

Work on schoolwide teams consistently builds the instructional capacity of teachers to promote student attainment of national standards and the school's improvement goals, resulting in the enhancement of teacher practice and increased progress for targeted students.

Supporting Evidence

- A variety of inquiry teams promotes the school's literacy and math goals and supports student progress in meeting national standards. Grade-level teams meet weekly to review data and determine strategies to support students via small group instruction, which is connected to the school's instructional goals on using assessment to drive instruction and the development of standards-based lessons. During a second cycle of inquiry, teachers focused on vocabulary acquisition across content areas. A review of team agendas and notes indicate that across teams, teachers have researched different strategies including the list, identify, note, create, and self-test (LINCS) strategy, to provide help with word retention. Other strategies teachers have utilized include using graphic organizers and an interactive word wall, thus influencing the types of instructional approaches utilized with diverse learners.

- For the ELA and math vertical teams, teachers chose two students, an English Language Learner, and a student with a disability, to focus on target areas of improvement and discuss strategies to support them. A review of ELA and math team notes reflects that teachers are focused on integrating more math vocabulary and strategies to support problem solving using a five-step approach and a book called, Goalbook, as a resource for other strategies. After reviewing their students' written responses, the ELA team also decided to focus on vocabulary as students were demonstrating difficulty in properly using adjectives. This resulted in the team's focus on monitoring descriptive writing and the use of graphic organizers that focus on traits or attributes, leading to the improvement in student work.

- During a second grade meeting, teachers used a protocol to norm and reflect on a rubric used to assess students' responses to a performance task using the ENL progressions. Working as pairs of teachers they reviewed the work and noted that a common need for improvement was the use of grade-level vocabulary, mechanics, and syntax. Some students showed difficulty building more complex sentences from simple ones. The teachers agreed that although students are beginning to make growth, more work to support their writing sophistication was needed. As a result, teachers discussed and agreed upon using sentence starters and a student's self-assessment checklist to support two targeted students for the beginning of the third inquiry cycle in order to enhance the students' writing skills.