Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. K231
K-8 75K231
5601 16 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204

Principal: Jude Arthur

Dates of Review:
November 30, 2017 - December 1, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen
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. K231 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>
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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>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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The principal and assistant principals consistently communicate a coherent set of high expectations across multiple school sites regarding student self-advocacy, independence, and transitions (S.I.T.). School staff engages in various forms of communication to effectively partner with parents regarding the school’s high expectations.

Impact

At each of the school's sites, staff is trained and supported on how to embody S.I.T. practices, and members hold each other accountable for their implementation. Parents and guardians are consistently positioned to support their children’s progress towards meeting S.I.T. expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have a clear understanding of the academic and life skills that will support their students’ transition toward least restrictive learning environments. In collaboration with families, the school developed S.I.T. The monthly newsletter, Connections 231K, highlights inquiry-based teacher teamwork where teachers hold themselves accountable for implementing learning strategies that are aligned to S.I.T. In the November issue, a team was acknowledged for focusing on increasing prompted and unprompted peer-to-peer communication.

- Observation feedback is another tool for supporting and clarifying S.I.T. expectations. After witnessing students’ curiosity about a topic they were learning, the administrator recommended the use of a what I know, what I want to know, and what I learned (KWL) chart as a way to cultivate student interest and thinking. Feedback also encouraged student ownership by providing them with resources and instruction informed by student interest.

- The Help Our Pupils Excel (H.O.P.E.) initiative is another structure explicitly designed to address S.I.T. The H.O.P.E. committee designs professional development on targeted interventions that teachers can use to address the essential areas of independence, which are making requests; functional method of communication; waiting; accepting removals, transitioning, sharing, taking turns; accepting “No,” following directions; completing daily living skills; and tolerating situations. The H.O.P.E. committee meets regularly to plan and analyze student data related to these skills.

- Parents unanimously claim that the three things school staff do best are communicate, show respect toward them and their children, and work hard to support their children’s learning needs. They spoke of receiving daily report cards that keep them abreast of daily progress, as well as communication notebooks. A parent noted that the notebooks give her many recommendations on how she can follow up at home. Websites that serve as resources for reading, math and communication were provided via the notebooks.

- In addition to structures for frequent, ongoing communication, the school also provides monthly parent workshops, Family Fun Fridays and back to school nights. Speaking to what is gained from such onsite experiences, a parent said that she is encouraged to, “Try this. Try that. I have a lot of those charts at home to create structure, like the ones you see in the classroom.” A parent whose child has difficulty staying on topic when conversing shared that the teacher suggested that they should both label what they do not want by saying, “that’s not relevant.” Consistency in school and at home has helped the child focus while talking. A parent who attended speech training learned about how to use a whiteboard at home to help her son see when to use the appropriate pronoun.
Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula with appropriate scaffolds and routines that are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. However, in some instances, S.I.T. values are not effectively implemented.

Impact

Teaching practices reflecting S.I.T. values engage students in appropriately rigorous tasks that produce meaningful work products, given their varied learning challenges. However, they are not coherent across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- During a kindergarten to grade two reading lesson focused on sequencing, the teacher used pictures to show what happened first, next and last. She then made a connection to stories by stating that they have a beginning, middle and an end. Students worked together in small groups to identify the sequence of events. In one group supported by a paraprofessional (para), a student read aloud and was directed to ask content-based questions to each of the other two students. The para supported the nonverbal student with a touch pad that verbalized whether or not he agreed. Independent work consisted of students pasting images in the right order with support, as needed. In another 6:1:1 class, two paras worked with two students in an activity that required students to compare the value of numbers. One para offered virtually no wait time for the student to think about his answers and instead over prompted him to articulate the desired response.

- The teaching point during an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson was “I can write on self-selected topics, and I can edit my writing according to my goals.” Within this class-wide task were two, more specific, ability-based objectives. While one student group wrote a topic sentence, the other wrote a partial sentence of at least two words. Students referenced different support materials as they worked. One student had a vocabulary list written in a notebook open to words that begin with the letter “b.” His tablemate utilized a pronoun chart and a list of common animals to support his writing. Every student had a short list of goals to inform their writing. One such list included sentences, topic sentence, subject and verb in each sentence, while another read topic sentence, pronouns, indent, lowercase letters, and four sentences. Such strategies promote independent work that is appropriate to each student.

- Students in a verbal behavior class simultaneously engaged in ability-based learning tasks across the room. The classroom teacher paired with one student, as did a para with another to engage in Intensive Teaching. The adults asked their student partners questions informed by their ability levels. While holding up a card with an image on it, the adult would ask questions like, “What is this?” or “A ball is a kind of…?” These students focused on correctly answering the questions at a consistent pace without distraction. At another table, a para supported two students in peer-to-peer interaction. The nonverbal student used a tablet that articulated words he would type. During this interaction, the para prompted the students’ interaction so much that opportunities for the two boys to authentically engage with each other were missed, hindering the level of student independence.

- In another class, five different groups of students engaged in tasks that involved decoding words and identifying sounds and letters to correctly pronounce and spell them. One student wore sound dampening headphones as she worked with a para on spelling while snapping her fingers to each letter in the word “town.” Across the room, a student read a passage while identifying compound words.
## Additional Finding

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

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, Career Development and Occupational Standards (CDOS) and/or Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) standards. Academic tasks emphasize challenging ability appropriate habits and skills for all students with learning challenges.

### Impact

The staff’s approach to curriculum design builds coherence across the multiple sites and promotes student transitions to less restrictive environments, as well as college and career readiness for all.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across all sites, curricula are aligned based on the instructional program. For example, Verbal Behavior curricula utilize intensive teaching strategies based on The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Language for Learning as an ELA intervention and Equals for math intervention. Alternate assessment classes use units of study based on SANDI assessments in ELA and math. Standard assessment classes use EngageNY for ELA and math.

- Lesson plans from verbal behavior classes show a shared commitment to independent workstations, peer-to-peer interaction, and one-on-one work with teachers based on individualized learning targets. The foci of the group work in the fourth and fifth grade lesson plan are peer-to-peer communication and social interaction. Group work in the kindergarten through second grade plan includes tolerating sitting in a group and communicating using eye contact.

- A math lesson plan from a 6:1:1 grade two through four class addresses the Common Core standard that requires that students compare numbers using >, =, and < symbols. The task is for students to use dice to roll and compare amounts by counting dots, then write numbers into greater than and less than charts.

- A unit on fairy tales and tall tales includes a lesson plan for grade three and four students in an 8:1:1 setting that would have students identifying exaggerations in the story *Pecos Bill* and compare them to those previously discussed in *Paul Bunyan* by using a Venn diagram. Common Core standards embedded in the lesson include the reading standard that guides students to ask and answer questions, orally or in writing, utilizing recall, and understanding details from a work of fiction.

- The plan for a grade three to five 12:1:1 lesson is aligned to CDOS standards that outline skills and competencies essential for success in the work place. The activity involves students asking each other self-advocacy questions regarding whether they can complete a task with or without assistance.
### Findings

Teachers use various common assessments to determine students’ abilities and progress across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teachers check for understanding, and provide students with opportunities to self-assess.

### Impact

Curricula, student groupings and instructional practices are informed by data from common assessments. Teachers’ assessment practices during instruction enable them to make effective adjustments that more effectively meet the learning needs of their students.

### Supporting Evidence

- S.A.N.D.I. assessment data are used to determine student developmental levels and groupings. This directly informs teacher selection of units of study for each developmental group based on the math and ELA scope and sequence. For example, in October, students classified as beginning learned how to identify the main idea, while those who were transitional learned how to interpret an author’s purpose. In November, students at the developing level were taught addition and subtraction word problems, while their peers that were at the expanding level learned ratios and proportional relationships.

- Teachers and paras in verbal behavior classrooms consistently use a skill tracking system to monitor student progress with ABLLS. The tracker for an intermediate learner shows that he has significant gains in skills within cooperation and motivation effectiveness, which include “responds within three seconds to instruction”, and “works with multiple instructors,” yet has only begun to successfully evidence intraoral skills such as “makes related comments regarding pictures”, and “answers why questions.”

- Throughout a lesson on exaggeration, the teacher consistently checked for understanding by asking leveled questions that elicited prior knowledge, student opinion, understanding of key vocabulary, and reading comprehension. When she asked what an exaggeration was, a student responded with, “Something that seems bigger than life.” The teacher followed up with, “Who can give an example?” Another student offered a man holding up a house. After reviewing prior knowledge that would support the task, and referencing the tall tales check-list that students would use to check their own understanding, the teacher read a brief excerpt and asked whether or not it was an exaggeration. Students responded by holding up their “This is an exaggeration” signs.

- The teachers of a lesson on independence and self-advocacy consistently encouraged student volunteers to self-assess their ability to complete tasks with or without support. When a student came to the front of the room and was unable to write her name correctly on a white board, a teacher asked her what she should do. When the student said, “Ask for help,” the teacher replied, “Good job being a self-advocate.” The class also assessed the volunteers. At one point the other teacher asked, “Is he doing it by himself or does he need help?” Student responses to such questions informed when teachers intervened themselves or encouraged students to assist their classmates.
### Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision

#### Rating: Well Developed

### Findings

Teachers receive effective feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges and next steps through the strategic use of classroom observation cycles and the analysis of student work and data.

### Impact

The effective feedback articulates clear expectations for teaching practices, supports professional development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers noted that feedback can take different forms depending on the site, yet all agreed that it is frequent and useful. School leadership stated that they do three to five minute walkthroughs “virtually every day, in every class,” and follow up with verbal feedback. Assistant principals, who are based at specific locations, all complete a minimum of two rounds of observations at their own sites, and two rounds at another site.

- A sample of the types of formal feedback that teachers receive showed ample low inference evidence from the observed lessons. One noted strength in such a report acknowledged that classroom interactions between the teachers and students, as well as among students, were highly respectful, and reflected genuine warmth, caring and sensitivity to students as individuals. Challenges included the teacher giving more directives than posing questions, as intended in the learning objective. The written feedback referenced Danielson *Framework for Teaching* 3B, and read, “You need to use a variety of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively and advance high-level thinking.” The specific recommendation was for the teacher to ask follow up questions such as, “How do you know?” after a student successfully answers a low level, closed ended question.

- School leaders purposefully provide feedback aligned to teachers professional goals. In one observation report, the feedback guided the teacher toward developing more rigorous teaching targets related to the professional goal of improving the instruction of reading comprehension. Specifically, the recommendation was for the teacher to focus on getting students to ask questions about the author’s purpose to better understand the text. Another report supported a different teacher with the same goal to emphasize the importance of engaging in multiple close reads of the same text, each time through the lens of questions with increasing complexity.

- All teachers have regularly scheduled discussions with school leaders called “Evidence of Student Progress” meetings. The conversations are grounded in the analysis of student work and performance data. The discussion criteria include teachers’ abilities to provide and demonstrate class-wide and individual student growth, student progress in meeting/exceeding Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, and evidence of their analysis of student data and how those analyses informed their instructional next steps. Notes from such a dialogue illustrate a decision to expand the teacher’s feedback to students to include areas for growth so that students know what they need to work on.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

#### Rating: Well Developed

**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers follow a specific cycle of inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations, which include established protocols that allow them to systematically analyze new instructional practices, student work, and data.

**Impact**

Inquiry team practices strengthen teacher instructional capacity, promote schoolwide instructional coherence, and increase mastery of goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams are provided with clear expectations for how to collaboratively engage in cycles of inquiry. Some of the steps outlined for them are to identify a problem as the subject of inquiry, research two or more strategies to implement to attempt to address the problem, and implement the first strategy and collect data. This analysis is to inform whether the second strategy is to be utilized. This structure supports schoolwide coherence in effective inquiry as it emphasizes the discovery of new instructional practices and the analysis of the impact of these practices in order to determine their usefulness.

- The verbal behaviors teacher team met to discuss their students’ inability to successfully complete an Essential for Living assessment. A protocol was followed that provided roles and steps to follow for the 45 minute meeting. They reiterated the importance of students being able to independently complete the 10 consecutive tasks with as little verbal prompting as possible. They referenced two articles they had read that offered suggestions for how to teach independent living skills. Both were written to address the teaching of students on the autism spectrum; one was about decreasing students’ reliance on adults, the other was on using photographic activity schedules. They then watched a video from one of their classes where the strategies from the articles were implemented. The team then asked clarifying questions of the presenting teacher. One question was whether the tasks in the assessment should consist of activities normally associated with life as a student in the classroom, as opposed to some of the tasks that included home activities. After a round of glows and grows, the group agreed to a set of next steps, such as reducing the number of verbal prompts, spreading the tasks around the room, and incorporating classroom functions.

- The goal for another team was that within 10 weeks, prioritized students would acquire the ability to independently put on deodorant. One strategy, identified as a result of research, was to use a visual schedule for students to reference while putting on deodorant. The second strategy was to use video modeling before engaging in the deodorant routine. The discussion section from the minutes of team meetings conducted over the course of the cycle indicate that students progressed from needing verbal counting to initiate the use of deodorant to having verbal students count for themselves. All students made progress in the routine based on steps such as lifting their arms, switching deodorant between hands, and opening and closing the deodorant container.

- Documents from other teams show progress of groups of students in asking for assistance and members of another team’s ability to teach their students to develop sight-word recognition in a fun, collaborative, and independent manner.