Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Gregory Jocko Jackson School of Sports, Art, and Technology

K-8 23K284

213 Osborn Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Keva Pitts

Dates of Review:
May 24, 2018 - May 25, 2018

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

The Gregory Jocko Jackson School of Sports, Art, and Technology 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Developing</td>
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<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>Developing</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
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<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>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
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<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>
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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>Additional Finding</td>
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<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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</table>
Area of Celebration

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

**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate the importance of modeling and the use of anchor charts as high expectations for instruction throughout the school. School staff, as well as leadership, provides families with expectations that relate to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

There is a system of accountability as well as training to support teachers in implementing school-wide expectations regarding modeling and using anchor charts during instruction. Parents consistently have access to information connected to their children’s’ path to college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A memo from earlier in the school year set the expectation and tone for the use of anchor charts. In it, the date for a professional development workshop was shared as was the suggestion that those who needed further support were to reach out to any one of three instructional coaches. The memo also read that the administrative team and literacy and math coaches would be checking for compliance with this practice during English Language Arts (ELA) and math lessons as it should “show cohesiveness across the grades and subject areas.”

- Observation reports provide teachers with feedback on their implementation of these expectations. One report commended a teacher on her modeling of the use of a graphic organizer. It was noted that as a result, students were successful in completing the task, and many used the model as a resource when engaged in the activity. Another report reflected the nonnegotiable role of charting. It recommended that the procedures for the order of operations be memorialized on chart paper so that students could refer to them as needed over the course of the school year.

- The professional development plan contains sessions explicitly focused on the use of charts as well as modeling. The topics for these sessions include: “Chat and chew” (Instructional expectations and checks for coherence in best instructional practices), “Using Anchor Charts to aid in Instruction,” and “Clear expectations/School-wide Coherence.”

- The school staff regularly communicates with families regarding student progress. An online platform is used to share various aspects of student well-being. In addition to behavioral qualities, information pertaining to homework and assignment completion, as well as assessment scores, is continually updated. In addition to the report cards issued over the course of the year, parents may also request progress reports. Parents commented that they have ample access to teachers. Specifically, they mentioned Monday afternoons as a time when they can schedule appointments with teachers, and the use of folders that serve as a means for written communication between parents and teachers.
Findings
Teaching strategies across classrooms do not consistently provide students with multiple entry points that allow them full access to the curricula and to produce meaningful work products.

Impact
Students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, show uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks, as well as uneven levels of higher order thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The learning objective for a grade-three writing lesson was “I can include objects that are meaningful to my character.” The teacher shared that in fairy tales, the author can change the character, setting, time, main event, and motivation to evolve the story, but he will always focus on one object. After reading a version of “Little Red Riding Hood” that she had modified for the lesson, she asked students what they noticed, what other fairytale it reminded them of, what she changed, and what her focus was. These questions and student responses to them did little to forward the stated learning objective. She then asked students to use a rubric to evaluate her story. The rubric, which included the criteria: writing, illustrations, story sequencing, understanding character, and understanding setting, did not reference an author changing elements of the story or focusing on an object, and also did not support the learning objective. This lack of clarity and coherence during instruction did not position students to engage in an appropriately challenging task or to think or participate at high levels.

- While working with a small group of students who were having difficulty with adding and subtracting fractions in an Integrated Co-Teaching class, one of the teachers held up a number line and asked where one should start counting from if you want to model adding 1/6 to 3/6. None of the students knew the answer, so he stated, “You should start at 3/6.” This incorrect directive was never corrected verbally. Students were observed copying what the teacher was modeling with minimal cognitive engagement. When asked to explain what a fraction is, most students were not able to provide an appropriate response. One stated, “It's something you can add and subtract.”

- In a grade-five/six writing class, students were charged with developing arguments. Although a task within the lesson was for students to discuss details and evidence that supported their claims, they were overheard merely sharing claims. In addition, most students were exploring the same side of the argument—agreeing with having chocolate milk in schools. Without more disagreement, students were not compelled to deepen or defend their stances, thereby decreasing the level of rigor in the task.

- At times, the instruction during an ELA lesson about using the elements of fantasy to build a fictitious character was unclear. The chart paper noted that characters have special powers and that animals take on human qualities. When a student shared a character using personification of an animal, the teacher said “Make him more fictitious.” When asked what that meant, the student did not know, as she thought she was following what was on the chart paper. Another student asked if they could use the character that the teacher used as a model. She responded yes, but they would have to “change the character up.” Students were unsure how they would change the character since it met the criteria of the assignment. Students were not provided with the scaffolds necessary to illicit the creativity needed to successfully engage in the task.
**Additional Finding**

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

School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or the instructional shifts. The curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills that are modeled by teachers across grades and subjects and for all ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Impact**

The purposeful decisions made regarding curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- According to a grade-five lesson plan for a writing class, students would be exposed to the skills related to building an argument by watching videos and taking notes on whether chocolate milk should be served in schools. The teacher would model one side of the argument by writing basic information on a t-chart with one side arguing for, and the other side arguing against. Students would then find two pieces of evidence to support the opposing stance. They would then continue gathering evidence for and against chocolate milk in schools in preparation for writing from their perspective on the following day. The plan reflects the instructional shift of writing from sources in its emphasis of using evidence to make an argument.

- The plan for a grade-two math lesson was grounded in the learning standard that requires students to interpret a picture graph that shows data. The concepts of “keeping track” as a way of recording, data as information, and surveying as a means of collecting data are prefaced in the lesson. The teacher would use a tally chart to pose questions regarding children who had chosen either sports or reading as their favorite hobby. In the first activity, students would have to count pictures to determine how many chose each hobby. The second activity would have them compare the lengths of the rows to discern the most and the fewest. The lesson would end with students drawing picture graphs, creating a key to clarify what the picture represents, and writing a paragraph about what data was shown in the picture graph. Such activities promote higher order skills.

- The math instructional shifts of deep understanding and application were noted in a lesson plan for a grades three and four self-contained class. The learning standards informed the need for students to understand the attributes of different classifications of shapes, as well as draw specific two-dimensional figures using points, lines, and angles. The modeling section of the plan focused on building student understanding of polygons. After drawing a V, the teacher would ask whether the letter was a polygon, whether it was a circle, how to make it a polygon, and whether it would be possible to draw a polygon with only two sides. All answers would have to be explained by the students. The lesson progresses to identifying various polygons as well as naming objects in the classroom that represent different polygons. The last activity involves having students make a set of polygon cards, where they would write the name on one side, then draw and write the number of sides and angles on the other side.
Additional Finding

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

Student understanding of rubrics used to assess their work is uneven across classrooms. Teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Feedback provided to students is limited and teachers do not consistently make effective adjustments during instruction to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Some of the rubrics used have areas between the numerical ratings called mid-level, intended to reflect student performance between, for example, a level two and three. However, there were students who were not sure what the circled “mid-level” meant on their scored rubrics. While one student was able to explain organization and how it informs quality writing in her own words, a peer did not understand what the criteria “craft” meant from his rubric.

- When looking at their work that had been assessed by teachers, there was inconsistency in students’ ability to enact feedback to improve their work. A teacher wrote that a student needed an inference and another detail, but the student could not articulate what an inference is. As one student was clear that he needed to fix the ending of a writing task by using the conclusion paragraph to summarize key points, another student was not clear what he would do differently on a reading comprehension task and simply stated that he would re-read the passage. A student’s interpretation of teacher feedback resulted in the realization that the graph she had made for a task involving linear relationships was not good because of the scale she used. A peer who had received minimal feedback on a math task about proportional relationships did not know how he could do better and stated, “I would probably stop being lazy and complete the work.”

- A number of teachers missed opportunities to check for student understanding of key concepts embedded in the lesson. In two different math lessons, one in a grade-one class and another in a grade-seven class, measurement was the instructional focus. In both classes, following procedures to get the correct numerical values was emphasized over students acknowledging the appropriate units of measurement. In the grade-one lesson, students used strips with photocopied paperclips on them to measure objects around the room. While at their desks, students were to fill in their measurements. Many students wrote the number representing the number of paperclips, and left the unit of measurement blank. A few wrote “inches.” While circulating throughout the room, the teacher focused on correcting the number written without addressing the incorrect unit. Similarly, in the grade-seven class, some students would just write the number, others (while measuring area) would incorrectly write “feet” as the unit of measurement. A number of students were confused by the distinction between feet and square feet. The teacher missed an opportunity to make a whole class adjustment to address the shared confusion.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders support teacher growth by following an observation schedule and offering feedback and next steps for improvement. This feedback accurately reflects pedagogical areas of strength and improvement that are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

The feedback provided to teachers conveys clear expectations for professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and assistant principals follow an observation schedule that provides four deadlines over the course of the year by which each school leader is expected to observe specific sets of teachers. Primary, elementary, and middle school levels are rotated among the four of them so that they are all accountable for each grade band.

- Commendations offered to teachers in written reports clearly convey practices that teachers should build upon. One teacher was acknowledged for validating student responses by charting them and referring to them throughout the lesson with the comment, “When the student stated that the character was ‘gullible,’ you jotted down the word and asked the student to share the meaning with the class.” Another teacher was encouraged to continue dividing students up into ability based groupings so that scaffolds could be used to support their discussion of items that can be measured by either a liter or milliliter.

- Recommendations from school leaders focus teachers on practices in need of improvement. An assistant principal prioritized the importance of assessment in instruction with feedback that directed a teacher to have a point during the lesson when a checklist could be used to gather formative data, which could inform on the spot regrouping of students. Another report pointed out the need for a teacher to promote student to student dialogue by incorporating opportunities for them to turn and talk during the lesson.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

The majority of teachers collaborate in structured inquiry-based teams. Formal and informal distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teacher team work promotes school goals and purposefully targets specific Common Core Learning Standards to strengthen instruction across classrooms. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect the quality of teaching and learning schoolwide.

Supporting Evidence

- The math team used a looking at student work protocol to assess samples of student work involving adding and subtracting lengths by drawing diagrams. With copies of the appropriate Common Core Learning Standards present, they reflected on the performance of those students who exceeded, approached, or were below the standard. Students exceeding the standard showed the ability to understand problems and number sentences as well as use the correct operation. Those approaching the standard were able to understand the word problem, and they attempted to answer it using the number line, but were not always successful. Students not meeting the standard knew how to write number stories, but did not interpret the diagram by using the number line effectively. The team used this analysis to identify the implications for their teaching. Students exceeding the standard would write and solve their own two-step word problems. Students approaching the standard would receive small group re-teaching work involving close reading to identify key words. Re-teaching for students performing below the standard would include a child friendly rubric aligned to the standard. Such structured team work promotes the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards while improving the pedagogy of team members.

- Minutes from other inquiry-based teacher meetings reflect a similar approach to collaboration and strategic next steps for improving instruction. In looking at student misconceptions related to adding and subtracting fractions, a team noticed that some students were adding the numerators and denominators, some were subtracting the numerators and denominators, and some were adding fractions correctly by finding the common denominator. Team members’ next steps included using anchor charts with exemplar student work showing multiple strategies, and re-teaching the skills to specifically address the misconceptions.

- The instructional cabinet is made up of four to five teachers who collaborate with school leaders to support the quality of teaching across the school.

- Teachers have a voice in a number of key decisions that impact instruction. The schoolwide use of an online student information sharing platform was initiated by teachers, as was the use of G-Suite and Google Drive, to efficiently store and share information among staff. Teachers lobbied for an increase in shared common planning time, which is now programmed on Fridays. As a result of a schoolwide analysis of student math data, teachers instituted Work Problem Wednesdays to enact a coherent approach to student word problem solving skills. Teachers were also responsible for bringing the strategy whereby students circle the numbers, underline the question, box the key words, evaluate, and solve math problems (CUBES) to the school after witnessing its impact on the learning within another school.