Quality Review Report

2017-2018

I.S. 303 Herbert S. Eisenberg
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 21K303
501 West Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11224

Principal: Carmen Amador
Dates of Review:
October 12, 2017 - October 13, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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

I.S. 303 Herbert S. Eisenberg serves students in grade 6 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support results in a safe and inclusive environment. Structures are in place, such as The Leader in Me program, to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

Impact
The school’s safe environment and inclusive culture is conducive to student and adult learning; students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcome and valued. Each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to coordinate supports that align with student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- *The Leader in Me*, based on *Seven Habits of Learning Leaders*, helps adults find out how they can be most supportive in relation to the goals for each student. The school has reinforced the seven habits for students as well, which include be proactive, begin with the end in mind, put first things first, think win-win, seek first to understand, then to be understood, synergize, sharpen the saw. The school conducts assemblies on Fridays during the first weeks of the school year to introduce each of the habits for the week. Some students were familiar with the next habit already as there is a focus on integrating the habits into classes. Some advisory teachers had introduced the latest habit in classes prior to the assembly. During the assembly, students were able to articulate what the habit meant and why it was important to start using that habit during their day-to-day activities to help them with their learning. *The Leader in Me* content is also integrated across content areas to build coherence across academic and social emotional learning. For example, in a seventh grade social studies class, the lesson plan integrated Leader in Me content to connect leadership qualities of historical explorers as students assessed which explorer would they want to lead them.

- Student voice is welcome and valued through student government that meets weekly and then follows up with monthly meetings with the principal. Student government representatives are also sub-divided into a beautification committee, a political action committee, election committee, and a community affairs committee, and a business committee. Students were able to give feedback regarding the school’s cell phone policy. Students commented during the student meeting, “We have student government, they work as a team to help to bring more academic supports and more trips and opportunities for activities.” Another student commented on student voice involved in News Literacy, “We have a voice in journalism, through News Lit, to make school better. We write a newspaper, it makes fifth graders want to come to our school. We look at the local news, international news, hot topics, and fake news. Our newspaper tries to persuade and entertain. We use computers to do research papers and analyze different sources that aren’t reliable.”

- A review of the school’s Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data report shows a reduction of overall incidents over the last three years, including a fifty percent decline in incidents from 2015-16 through 2016-17. The school’s advisory curriculum is designed to support student’s social-emotional learning, and focuses on reducing student isolation, providing a sense of family and group support, nurturing growth and development, and further bonds between students, school, and community. An anti-bullying assembly is held each school year to educate students about bullying and how the school offers support to address bullying. This was supported during the meeting with students when a student said, “In the past, I used to be a bully. At the anti-bullying assembly, I learned to not bully, it taught me how it could impact others and I’ve changed because of what I’ve learned here at school.”
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding student achievement, however practices were not evident across a vast majority of classrooms. Assessment data is used to adjust curricula and instruction, however there is not yet evidence that tracking progress is leading to increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. Actionable feedback appears on post-it notes and written on rubrics across the school in different grades and subjects. One student reported, “Using the rubric showed me I should improve to level four, some of the areas were level three and those were areas to improve.” While actionable feedback is apparent across classrooms, student work brought to the meeting with students did not contain actionable feedback on some of the work products illustrating that this practice was not yet in place across a vast majority of classrooms.

- Teachers use rubrics to rate student work and to forecast to students the expectations of assignments. Teachers indicate glows and grows or areas of celebration and improvement on slips of paper attached to rubrics. Additionally, teachers use rubrics as checklists. One student reported, “My teacher showed us how to annotate correctly. We would have to search for more details, to know where the quotes are located.” While the school has begun work on the creation of teacher data binders by determining what assessments and data would be included, this practice was a work in progress with an example from one teacher as a model, and was not evident yet across the school. As a result, assessment practices do not yet offer a clear portrait of student mastery.

- Common assessments are used to determine student progress and considerations for schoolwide support. Teachers use item analysis of skills from New York State assessments, baseline assessments, benchmark assessments, and performance tasks to address learning targets for students. New York City Performance Tasks in math, English Language Arts (ELA), science, and social studies are administered twice a year at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year, to Measure Outcomes of Student Learning (MOSL), ELA classes administer My Perspectives common assessments at the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year. Common My Perspectives unit assessments are also administered across classes. GO Math! beginning, middle, and end of year common assessments track student progress in mathematics, in addition to unit assessments in GO Math!. Reading Plus assessments are common across grades to support building student reading skills. Common assessments result in ongoing curricular modifications across content areas, however all students do not currently demonstrate increased mastery. While there has been some growth on NYC performance tasks, classroom assessments, and unit performance tasks, this has not resulted in consistent growth on NYS standardized exams.
### Additional Finding

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

#### Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts, including a news literacy course that all students take. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

#### Impact

Purposeful decisions build curricular coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are engaged in rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills.

#### Supporting Evidence

- All students take a news literacy course which builds media literacy skills as students evaluate the reliability of news sources and apply those skills in their research strategies across content areas. The news literacy course is connected to Common Core standards such as evaluating the argument and claims in text. Curricular materials include texts chosen for high, middle, and low students. Scaffolds include a checklist of "Ten questions for fake news detection" to aide students in detecting fake news stories. Students also use technology to verify and critically analyze the sources during their fact checking tasks outlined within the news literacy curricula. Students’ abilities to analyze sources, cite textual evidence, and determine validity of information across content areas is built by the news literacy course and this foundation is further developed across grades and content areas.

- ELA curriculum maps show evidence of modification by incorporating a skill of the week such as character traits, citing textual evidence, author’s purpose, central idea, and theme. Instructional shifts in math are evidenced by connections to the real world. For example, in a sixth grade math market activity, students apply appropriate mathematical concepts when adding and subtracting decimals through everyday shopping activities. In a seventh grade ELA lesson plan, differentiated activities for students included scaffolded worksheets for high, middle, low instructional groups based on beginning of the year and informal assessments. In a seventh grade social studies lesson plan, students cite textual evidence to investigate attributes of explorers and make evaluative judgments of initial encounters between Native Americans and European explorers via guiding questions such as “How can we investigate the attributes of explorers by evaluating the qualities that make them a good leader?” Differentiated activities for instructional groups include a higher level activity with a Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level four worksheet that uses a chart to create their perfect leader for today’s world and to highlight and justify what attributes they would possess. Three middle groups use a DOK level three worksheet to develop a logical argument for the explorer they would sail with listing what attributes they would possess and evidence to support their position. A low group uses a DOK level two worksheet to infer about qualities necessary to be a good leader and why those attributes are necessary.

- All students have access to cognitively engaging tasks such as in a seventh grade ELA class where students are asked to analyze the way setting influences character development by citing textual evidence. An eighth grade ELA lesson asks students to analyze the tone of a narrative by differentiating between the denotation and connotation of the author’s word choice. In a sixth grade ELA lesson, students cite text-based evidence in order to make inferences. In a seventh grade math lesson plan, students are expected to add rational numbers, model integer addition on a number line, and break down word problems with integers. An eighth grade ELA lesson includes predetermined groups based on assessment data with graphic organizers to support students with disabilities and ELLs.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula enabling students to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

**Impact**

All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During an eighth grade ELA Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class lesson on tone, denotation and connotation, students were working in groups. Teachers modeled how literal definitions, denotation, might not match intended meanings, connotation. Students were able to identify reasons why there seemed to be a misunderstanding during the teacher modeling of denotation and connotation with specific examples as they role-played the vocabulary terms. Students were taking notes in notebooks during the classwide discussion and then transitioned to My Perspectives groups to look at vocabulary from “You Are The Electric Boogaloo.” Each table group had differentiated graphic organizers for analysis and using text evidence. During a seventh grade ELA and English as a New Language (ENL) lesson on citing evidence to make connections between character development and setting, the teacher modeled with A Long Walk to Water as she provided multiple entry points addressing the needs of students who spoke multiple languages, with differentiated worksheets, sentence frames, sentence starters and the use of Google Translate.

- In a seventh grade math ICT class, students were working in mixed groups with rational number word problems. Students were helping each other and engaged in student discussions within their table groups. As the teacher checked with groups and asked, “What was another challenge?” a student responded, “We got the right answer, but we didn’t bring down the number.” The culminating share out at the end of the lesson included teacher to student to teacher share out. During an eighth grade social studies class, students were working in five collaborative groups on an industrial revolution gallery walk project. Students used multiple annotated texts and a fact sheet during their collaborative group work time. Students presented their topics, including industrial revolution, immigration, working conditions, and child labor. While one group was presenting to class, other students in the audience filled out a group evaluation sheet exit ticket assessing each group’s main points and overall presentation.

- During a news literacy class, students were working in collaborative groups, working on looking at news stories on the fires in California while analyzing the validity of sources. Group roles were well defined and evident during student discussions as students assumed their roles and looked at verification, independence, and authoritative aspects of sources. During a sixth grade ELA class, the teacher showed a photo from Sierra Leone and asked students to write in notebooks what they saw in relation to understanding the setting of the character Michaela from “The War Orphan who Became a Ballerina.” Students wrote in notebooks and shared out the evidence they saw in the photo. One student commented while citing evidence from the text, “It doesn’t say in the text. To make an inference, it’s lowering her self-esteem.” During a sixth grade math class, students worked on differentiated math market problems with their tablemates on shopping tasks for the week. Students discussed their findings with their peers. Each group’s presenter went up to the front of room and presented their group’s completed worksheet on the document camera. During a group’s share out, a student responded to her classmate during a classwide discussion, “I disagree, in real life you have to know decimals.”
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to families.

Impact

Effective communication and professional development results in a system of accountability for high expectations for teacher goals and student academic goals. Families understand student progress toward expectations of student college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- I.S. 303 Weekly is a publication that communicates expectations to staff from administration. The teacher handbook outlines high expectations and responsibilities of teachers, including supervision, anecdotal reporting, portfolios, classroom displays, lesson plans, data collection, and teacher observations. Individual planning conferences include analysis of student data connected with personal goals for improving teacher practice. The school uses surveys posed to staff to get input on the effectiveness of committees on the learning environment. This allows the school to adjust professional development to support the work of teachers and professional learning committees. The school conducted a professional development session at the beginning of the school year regarding utilizing data to inform instruction for 2017-2018. The training included an analysis of three years of recent student achievement data and its implications for the work of individual teachers and teacher teams moving forward during this school year.

- A sixth grade parent orientation happens at the end of the school year leading into the summer prior to students joining the school. The orientation includes information about curriculum, co-curricular and extracurricular programs, community partnerships, expected supply lists, and sixth grade summer achievement activities. Parents reported that they appreciate the communication they receive during parent-teacher conference events. Parents also reported that teachers use PupilPath, ClassDojo, and GO Math! access codes as online supports for communication to parents. A parent reported how communication from the school has helped to support understanding of college and career readiness for her student, “I was informed by the teacher about his academic goals and needs. I had a chance to talk with her, she already knew what he needed to improve his learning and I’ve worked with her to help him to improve his school grades.”

- Teacher-level goals include the use of student achievement data that drives student groupings for instructional planning. Progress is monitored by collecting student performance data on assessments during the school year. In addition, professional goals aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching are included, such as moving from developing to effective and highly effective on indicators that measure content knowledge and pedagogical skills.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share.

Impact

The work of teacher teams promotes the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The seventh grade math inquiry team was observed reviewing student work representing focusing on improving students’ ability to break down a problem and make sense of it. Teachers presented specific students to observe common trends across classes. Each teacher brought examples of student work from identified students and explained to their colleagues what the assignment was in their class. Each teacher took time to describe student work and any systems put in place to support the students. Teachers made inferences and stated that students benefitted from using close reading strategies, sentence prompts, and graphic organizers. Collectively, the group decided how they can help students who still struggled despite the scaffolds.

- During a sixth grade ELA teacher team meeting, the inquiry team looked at effective lessons that include self-assessment, incorporate a checklist for students, have a DOK extension activity, an exit ticket, classroom work, and a formative assessment. In an effort to determine how student data is driving instruction, the ELA team agreed upon the format of a data binder to include baselines and Reading Plus data. The inquiry team also discussed what roles would be effective when grouping students so that every student has a voice. Roles included recorder, presenter, leader, time keeper, and errand monitor. The inquiry team also discussed how to incorporate daily groups based on the use of data from exit tickets, one on one conferencing, and class work collected each day. Reading Plus data indicates twenty-five of twenty-eight students who were part of a pilot program during the second half of the 2016-2017 school year, showed improvements in their reading levels. As a result of this positive movement of students reading levels, the school moved forward with the purchase of Reading Plus for this school year and has integrated it into more ELA classes to target more students.

- Teacher teams meet weekly. Teams include the ELA and math teams who meet by grade level, and the professional development team. A member from each grade level content area teacher team is represented on the professional development team. Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and teachers reported improvement in their instructional practice due to their work in teacher teams. As one teacher shared, “They help me, we’re our best sounding boards. It is good to get a different perspective. One example is I’ve learned two different models to use with my students, one for whole group and another for small group instruction.”