Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. K315
Elementary 22K315
2310 Glenwood Road
Brooklyn
NY 11210

Principal: Judith Ranft

Dates of Review:
March 20, 2018 and March 22, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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. K315 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

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

## Systems for Improvement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

Teachers benefit from a culture of mutual accountability of high expectations around professional development, common planning, and the Continuous Learning initiative. Strong communication through letters, phone calls, and online platforms empower families to academically support their students’ progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teacher practice through professional development opportunities and written communication to reinforce elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, in the beginning of the school year school leaders provide a staff handbook and other communiques, highlighting professional learning opportunities throughout the year and initiatives to ensure an environment of high expectations. Among the information that teachers receive is the English as a New Language (ENL) Teacher’s Guide and Student Resources. Additionally, school leaders plan professional development opportunities based on the needs of the students and to improve teacher practice. For example, to support teachers in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs), teachers have participated in ENL Strategies for Success, a workshop to train teachers to plan engaging lessons with appropriate and effective scaffolds for ELLs. Another professional development focus has been to engage students in learning. To that end, the school leaders have provided workshops on effective questioning and thinking routines throughout the year.

- Through the implementation of the Continuous Learning (CL) initiative, teachers and school leaders share mutual accountability for the success of ELLs. By embracing a school improvement mindset, teachers and school leaders are engaging in collaborative, inquiry-based processes such as intervisitations to make purposeful adjustments and create solutions to barriers for ELLs. School leaders are members of the CL project which meets regularly to create action plans, conduct intervisitations, and share ideas about how to support the needs of ELLs in the school. Meetings inform the school community about the needs of ELLs and having high expectations for both teacher practice and student learning. The work of the team has resulted in teachers using charts, visual thinking maps, and other resources to ensure the success of all students. School leaders support and communicate high expectations and share accountability for meeting those expectations as part of the school's improvement plan.

- Through written, verbal, and electronic communication, the school faculty effectively communicates expectations connected to college and career readiness. Through an online platform, teachers consistently communicate with families to support student progress toward achieving school goals. For example, parents reported that they appreciate and are informed of their children’s progress on a daily basis through text messages and are encouraged to visit their child’s classroom as needed. Parents partner with the school by attending and conducting presentations about their careers, breakfast with the principal, literacy night, and field trips. Additionally, teachers planned a college and career day where classes conducted research on different colleges and universities. Parents report that teachers on a regular basis communicate with them if their children meet the criteria for success in producing high-quality work products. Parents and their children reported learning and being equal partners with the school in preparing their children for future career and college choices.
Area of Focus

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

Teachers use or create rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Use of aligned rubrics has not yet resulted in teachers providing actionable and meaningful feedback to students. Teachers’ assessments practices consistently result in making effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs but have yet to result in students’ awareness of next steps for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- An analysis of student work products reflect the consistent use of rubrics and grading policies that are aligned to the curricula. For example, in math teachers use a standards-based rubric where students are graded based on meeting the criteria of a novice, apprentice, practitioner, or expert. A student was rated as expert and the teacher wrote that he had a complete understanding of the problem and did a great job rounding and in his computations. However, the teacher’s actionable feedback has yet to be meaningful for students as evidenced in self-reflections where one student wrote about being neater with his handwriting. In a writing assignment a student was provided with next steps such as to work on writing a stronger conclusion and to watch her spelling. However, the student wrote in her self-reflection that she would include her topic in the introduction. Actionable feedback to students are aligned to the school's grading policies but have yet to be meaningful for students and teachers regarding student achievement.

- Students are provided with actionable feedback on sticky notes and on rubrics. For example, on a math exemplar problem from GO Math!, a student was provided with a rating of novice. The teacher wrote on a sticky note that the student listed all the amounts for all holders but that she needs to explain her thinking. There was no evidence either in her work or when asked of the student understanding what her next steps for learning were. Similarly, another student was provided with written feedback regarding having omissions in his writing; however, he did not have any work products to reflect the use of the feedback and when asked, he stated that the teacher said he did not have enough words in his sentences. Another student was asked what her rating of novice meant. She could not respond or provide an example. Student feedback is generally provided using rubrics aligned to the curricula but have yet to reflect a clear portrait for student mastery and meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievements.

- Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices include the use of exit tickets, rubrics, and questioning. In addition, teachers use data from these practices to make instructional adjustments and inform groups. However, teachers missed opportunities to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all learners and make students aware of their next steps. For example, in a grade five math lesson, students conducted a gallery walk as a culminating unit on fractions. There were missed opportunities to check for understanding by asking groups of students to explain their thinking. In another classroom, where students had to program a robot mouse to move forward, backward, and turn, there were missed opportunities to ask students to demonstrate their understanding of the task by offering a different example and then releasing the students to try it on their own. In a grade three Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the teachers circulated monitoring student work to identify the theme of a story by finding details. Students expressed that finding details helps them understand the story better but could not define or say what the theme of a story is or how details are connected to the theme. There were missed opportunities for the teacher to refer back to the chart used for the mini-lesson to help students understand that details of a story support the central idea or theme of the text.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The school uses curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and that integrate the instructional shifts relative to text complexity and evidence-based writing. Data is used to plan and refine lessons for diverse learners.

Impact

Purposeful decision making in planning units and tasks promote student engagement and college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty use materials from a reading and writing program aligned to the Common Core. Teachers have focused on aligning the program using a balanced literacy model. They use leveled books for guided reading and resources available as part of the program which provide connections to the instructional shifts such as having a balance of non-fiction theme-related anchor texts. Teachers use other materials such as vocabulary cards and introductory lessons to assess students' prior knowledge by incorporating strategies such as think, see, and wonder. This strategy, evident in lessons and unit plans, has resulted in coherence across classrooms. The use of a balanced literacy approach using anchor texts, leveled books for small group instruction, and other resources that integrate the instructional shifts provide a road map to teach reading and writing.

- Across classrooms, teachers use GO Math! for math instruction. Math lessons and unit plans reflect the Common Core and instructional shifts. There is coherence built in the math curriculum by implementing a problem of the day, fluency practice, academic vocabulary, and by making math visible. In grades kindergarten to two, teacher plans reflect a listen and draw strategy to teach new concepts. In grades three to five, teachers plan for students to unlock the problem by making their thinking visible and explaining their thinking by using math accountable talk stems. Science and social studies is taught through the balanced literacy program by integrating non-fiction text and themes into units and lessons. For example, a grade five reading and writing unit is based on the study of endangered species and a grade five informative essay unit is about studying early American heroes. Curricula units and lessons reflect coherence to promote college and career readiness by carefully aligning the Common Core and instructional shifts.

- A review of curricula reveals planning and refinement so that all learners have access to cognitively engaging curricula. Teachers base their curricular adjustments on data analyzed after exit slips, pre-, and post-assessments. For example, units and lesson plans include choice of graphic organizers, hands-on materials such as using hundred charts to solve more and ten less problems in grade one, as well as grouping of students according to their specific needs. In reading and writing, teachers plan on meeting with groups of students and providing them with language support cards, audio stories, vocabulary readers, and leveled texts on the same concept. Students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in cognitively rigorous curricula and tasks. For example, in a grade five ELA unit, the students will read a text to explore the relationships between cause and effect. They will examine quotes and description in a text, identify and learn academic vocabulary such as adaptive, habitat, endangered, preservation, linking verbs, and procedural composition. In addition, the students will learn about myths and appreciate its lessons by reading Why Koala Has No Tail. Finally, students will produce a procedural composition after reading Quest for the Tree Kangaroo.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
The belief that students learn best when teachers confer with students and monitor their progress is evident across classrooms. However, instruction that includes multiple entry points has not yet resulted in high-quality supports and extensions to ensure appropriately leveled work for diverse learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect an articulated belief that students learn best when working in groups and having discussions. For example, in a grade five classroom, the teacher had students conduct a gallery walk by having pairs of students solve fraction problems. Students discussed with each other how to approach a problem and then solved the problem on a sticky note. The teacher conferred with pairs of students. In another classroom, fourth grade students used accountable talk when a student leader was leading a class discussion regarding Hercules Quest. After the discussion, students worked in groups to create a story structure on chart paper. Across classrooms, students had opportunities to lead discussions, and turn and talk about their thinking. Teachers aligned their instructional practices to their core beliefs about how students learn best that is rooted in the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- Across classrooms, instructional practices reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when teachers confer with students, and when they provide appropriate materials to scaffold learning. For example, in a grade three Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class about Judy Moody Saves the World, the teacher provided two different types of graphic organizers to find the theme of the text. Most students knew the theme of the story and were able to articulate it. The teacher circulated to provide verbal feedback as she asked, “What did you learn?” Students responded that they need details to learn about the theme about the main character saving the world. In another third-grade classroom, the teacher asked groups of students to create questions using higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy that they can use during a Socratic seminar. The teacher provided a list of question starters for students to use to come up with open-ended questions and guided the groups by asking “Which is the best question to give us the most discussion?” Teachers regularly conferred with students individually and in groups and monitored their progress by asking questions to guide their thinking.

- Across classrooms teaching strategies include questioning, scaffolds, and routines that consistently provide multiple entry points so that all learners remain engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. For example, in a self-contained class, the students watched a video about Hercules Quest and then turned and talked about how the characters are alike and different. One student said to another that the character likes to write. In a kindergarten classroom, the teacher modeled the use of academic vocabulary when teaching her students adjectives to describe dinosaurs. The teacher used a schoolwide strategy such as the see, think, and wonder strategy to have students turn and talk about an image of dinosaurs. The teacher used clear routines such as chants to have students ready and transition to another part of the lesson. There were multiple entry points used in this lesson through the use of visuals, text, video, and labels. The consistent use of multiple entry points ensures that all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks; however, these have yet to be strategically used in the vast majority of classrooms to engage all learners.
**Findings**

School leaders and teacher leaders provide feedback related to informal and formal observations through strategically planned cycles. Teachers’ professional goals are tracked and monitored in feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

**Impact**

Teacher growth is supported by effective feedback and purposeful next steps, which includes an analysis of student work samples and assessment data. Meaningful feedback is helping to improve teachers’ Advance ratings between observations and is aligned to their professional goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct observations using feedback loops. There is a strategic observation cycle using feedback by any school leader from the previous observations and enforced by analysis of student data and work products. The analysis of Advance ratings early in the year revealed a need to focus on the questioning and discussion component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers are supported throughout the year by allowing opportunities for teacher intervisitations and student data meetings with school leaders. Classroom observation reports evidence support of teacher goals around the questioning and discussion component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, a teacher's goal for the year is to refine her use of questions to promote student discussions. The school leader provided the teacher with professional development on effective questioning and incorporating discussion in her lessons. As a result, the teacher implemented partnerships and discussion in her lessons. The school leader noted in her report that the teacher has made improvements in her pedagogy to involve more students in discussion through partnering students.

- Teachers support their own development by conducting peer to peer observations and reflections of pedagogical practices. For example, teachers reported that as teachers participate in professional development, they conduct intervisitations. These intervisitations have impacted their teaching as teachers see the strategies in real time in their classrooms after learning about them during a professional development session. One teacher reported and all agreed that intervisitations in the school promote refinement of their skills through collegial reflections. Teachers who attend professional development outside of school become teacher ambassadors and turnkey their training to support teacher growth. In addition, teachers have data conversations with school leaders by examining performance tasks and they provide teachers with glows and grows about their findings.

- Classroom observation reports accurately capture strengths, challenges, and next steps using Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, a teacher received feedback in her report about ensuring student engagement throughout the lesson by adjusting her timing and streamlining components of her lesson to keep students engaged. In the next classroom observation of the same teacher, the school leader noted that the teacher had improved to highly effective in the student engagement component of Danielson by incorporating a jigsaw strategy with her students to answer questions and then provide peer feedback by using a rubric. Another teacher received feedback about providing more student ownership during her lessons after she and the school leader discussed how challenging it is for her to release control. She decided to provide choices for students to select their tasks in her lessons. The teacher reported that this feedback was meaningful to her and helped her students become more independent and responsible for their own learning. Schoolwide instructional practices have improved as evident in Advance ratings and as reported by teachers and school leaders.
### Additional Finding

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

**Rating:** Proficient

#### Findings

The majority of teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based collaborations on a bi-weekly basis. Teacher ambassadors and the Continuous Learning initiative are among the distributed leadership structures that impact school decisions.

#### Impact

There are grade-level leaders in place to help ensure that work is focused on improving student learning and that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations to identify students' academic challenges and to come up with next steps while sharing best practices and resources with each other. For example, the fourth-grade team met to discuss the mid-year math assessment results and discussed their findings and concerns to come up with an action plan to address their students’ challenges. Teachers collaborated on best practices regarding teaching long division and how to build fluency, labeling their work, and interpreting the remainder. The team decided to have a problem of the day, have students conduct gallery walks, identify misconceptions when planning, and have students work on projects to motivate them to solve multi-step problems. Teachers decided to meet again after implementing these strategies and analyze student performance. Teachers engage in inquiry cycles to ensure the implementation of the instructional shifts and Common Core Learning Standards.

- Teacher teams engage in collaborative dialogue to create action plans to address school goals such as to improve math instruction and learning for all students. Implementing GO Math! for the first time has necessitated the frequent analysis of pre- and post-assessments to ensure alignment of teaching practices to the Common Core and instructional shifts. For example, mid-year action plans based on teacher team analysis of the mid-year assessments, listed the areas of focus for the students such as number words, greater than and less than, understanding and interpreting remainders, and questions involving estimation, as well as the teachers' next steps such as the modeling of the circle, underline, box, evaluate and solve, or CUBES strategy, in the first through fifth grades. The frequent cycle of inquiry-based professional collaborations have resulted in strengthening teacher instruction as evidenced in math data where all grade levels have made gains.

- Through a teacher ambassador approach, teachers lead teacher teams and have made key decisions that affect learning across the school. For example, teacher ambassadors assigned for each subject attend out of school monthly meetings and turnkey training to the faculty on best practices for all subject areas. Teachers reported that their repertoire of teaching strategies has increased such as the use of the see, think and wonder strategy to increase student engagement in their classrooms. Teachers also reported that teachers feel empowered to go out and learn something new to then share it with the staff. For example, one teacher learned about an online application and as a result of the turnkey training, the staff and parents use the application to communicate and provide updates on grades, attendance, and behavior expectations. The Continuous Learning initiative team has focused on the needs of ELLs and has turn-keyed training on language acquisition research and how to scaffold questioning using visuals and sentence starters as well as creating an online shared drive to share ideas on questioning and scaffolds to address the needs of ELLs. Teacher leaders have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.