Quality Review Report

2017-2018

I.S. 364 Gateway

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 19K364

1426 Freeport Loop
Brooklyn
NY 11239

Principal: Nicole Fraser Edmund

Dates of Review:
March 14, 2018 - March 15, 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

I.S. 364 Gateway 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>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff communicate ongoing expectations to families regarding student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact
Ongoing communication, professional learning, and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers’ professional growth and hold them accountable for high expectations. Communication from school leaders and teachers through an online grading system and parent workshops provides frequent opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- As evidenced by the school’s professional learning and accountability structures, school leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff rooted in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders ensure that teaching practices and the school’s expectations for learning are in place through a system of formal and informal observations that inform professional learning opportunities. In a classroom observation report of a teacher, the principal recommended and provided a link to a video to help the teacher incorporate questions and discussions when she presents a video to her students. The teacher received a highly effective rating in using questioning and discussion techniques component of Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in her next observation. In addition, teachers receive weekly staff memoranda to inform them of the week’s happenings with a question of the week including expectations for professional learning. This communication includes resources such as video links and articles to read geared toward the needs of the students. For example, in the second week of October, the memorandum included the topic of looking at data to inform instruction. Teachers were provided with an article to read and discuss during their professional learning session. School leaders share findings of observations using an online platform and follow up with teachers on the application of the recommended strategies holding teachers and themselves accountable for having high expectations.

- Through the establishment of Focus, Action, Leadership, Community, Ownership, Never Giving Up, and Strength (FALCONS) University, the school faculty ensures a system of communication of high expectations with families. For example, in the beginning of the year, school leaders provided a Power Point presentation to families introducing them to the expectations of the school. Included in the presentation, families were informed about the grading policy and the upcoming ‘College Access for All’ trips for students to visit colleges and universities. In addition, separate meetings occurred throughout the year to inform parents of grade-level expectations. Other types of communications take place throughout the year such as letters to advise parents of their children’s acceptance into the National Honor Society, after-school programs, and Saturday tutoring.

- Parents are provided with ongoing feedback to help them understand their children’s progress toward a path to college and careers. For example, a parent workshop through FALCONS University was offered to explain and expose parents to the State English Language Arts Exam short-response questions. Parents reported that through these types of workshops, PupilPath, open door Tuesdays, emails, and phone calls, teachers inform parents of their children’s progress toward achieving grade-level expectations and be prepared for college and careers beyond high school.
Findings

Teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when they are engaged in discussions and when teachers use a student work monitoring tool. Student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

While some classrooms reflected the school’s beliefs, there were missed opportunities for students to engage in high levels of discussions, participation, and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices inconsistently reflect the school’s common set of beliefs. For example, in a grade-six strategic reading class, students used a workbook to find the central idea in a paragraph. After reviewing what a central idea is, the teacher showed a video about finding the central idea in the text. Students used sticky notes to write their own definition of central idea. There were missed opportunities to turn and talk or for student-led discussions about finding the central idea of a paragraph by reading authentic text. In another grade-seven social studies class, the learning objective was to interpret primary documents in order to write a short response using a two-point rubric. The teacher circulated around the room to help students with writing. There were missed opportunities to ask questions so that students engage in meaningful discussions about the two documents they were examining. Teachers inconsistently use the student work monitoring tool to adjust instruction and ask higher-order thinking questions to engage students in discussions.

- In a grade-six Integrating Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the math teacher worked with one group and the ICT teacher worked with another group. The teachers conducted parallel teaching to have students write equations from tables. The ICT teacher asked questions requiring students to give one response. For example, she asked, “What pattern do you see? And what operation am I going to use?” These questions did not result in student-to-student discussions in both groups. The teachers led the lessons as students raised their hands to answer questions. In addition, although these teachers used the student work monitoring tool to record student progress, the majority of teachers across classrooms inconsistently use this tool to adjust instruction.

- Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflected uneven levels of student thinking and participation. In a grade-seven science class, students were conducting research on evolution using science research stations and were actively engaged in various tasks, such as finding a website to answer higher-level thinking questions, for example, “How does the law of superposition help us determine the age of various fossils?” Whereas, in a grade-seven English Language Arts class, the students were reading Barrio Boy in class. Students waited for the teacher to distribute copies of the book as she directed students to turn and talk about what they thought they would be learning about based on the objective on the board. The objective on the board was to listen to the text Barrio Boy to complete a short response question based on the text. The students were having casual conversations and called out unrelated comments about the objective.
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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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts as evident in lesson plans and units of study. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Purposeful decisions to integrate literacy across the content areas build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Additionally, lesson plans that emphasize rigorous tasks require higher-order skills across grades and subjects and ensure that all students, including students with disabilities are supported.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lessons and units illustrate alignment to the Common Core and instructional shifts. For example, in a grade-six unit, students analyze conflict by reading *The Wounded Wolf* by Jean Craighead George. Students are expected to identify the main conflict of the text and cite evidence from the text to support their response. Additionally, there is evidence of purposeful planning to build coherence of curricula across grades. For example, in English Language Arts (ELA), in grade six, students define and identify conflict in a story; in grade-seven, the students discuss opposing forces; in grade-eight, students debate on whether all conflicts can be resolved.

- There is evidence of rigorous tasks for all students such as a grade-six lesson plan in which students are asked to identify various figurative language techniques to interpret how they can create different moods in a story. In this lesson, the teacher plans on using visuals for English Language Learners (ELLs), questions and support with pacing for at grade-level students and extensions for above grade-level students such as analyzing figurative language found in text followed by writing main idea statements and elaborating on their explanations. Groups are expected to use textual evidence to support their descriptions of the mood in the story. A review of the ELA units provides evidence of higher-order skills such as summarizing, predicting, and analysis expected for all students including students with disabilities and ELLs.

- There is evidence that rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners is consistently emphasized in the math and science curricula. For example, in a grade-seven lesson, the teacher plans for students to compute the lengths in an actual picture using a scale drawing and identify the scale factor to make intuitive comparisons of size and then devise a strategy for efficiently finding actual lengths using the scale. The teacher will provide scaffolds, such as providing definitions to student groups based on the data collected from the problem of the day, observation of the independent practice, and results of the unit pre-assessment. In a grade-eight science lesson, the teacher poses an essential question and provides an image of human beings evolving to hypothesize what humans will look like in 100,000 years. Students are expected to argue for or against the adaptation of humans in the picture based on their knowledge of evolution by supporting their responses with evidence. Higher-order skills are emphasized for all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics aligned to the curricula and create assessments such as benchmark assessments to analyze student learning. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to track student progress toward goals.

Impact

Students utilize teachers’ actionable feedback and assessment tools in order to increase their achievement. Benchmark assessment data is used by teachers to adjust instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use curricular-aligned, teacher-modified, and grade-level rubrics to grade student work. For example, in a grade-seven math class, the teacher used a four-point rubric for a unit performance task on correctly explaining and representing sums of opposites, adding, and subtracting integers. The teacher used a standards-based rubric along with a glow and grow attachment to provide the student with meaningful feedback. After reading her teacher’s feedback and ratings on the rubric, a student wrote that, in the future, she would look over her calculations and create a better number line to accurately answer questions similar to the ones that were incorrect. Another teacher used a portfolio assessment rubric for a grade-seven ELA class. The student received feedback on the use of a writing strategy acronym, restate the question, answer the question, cite the source, explain your response and summarize (RACES) to respond to questions using relevant evidence and citing resources.

- Across classrooms, the Common Core-aligned writing and content-related rubrics are on display. In a science classroom, a grade-six teacher used a rubric to grade student research reports on severe weather. The teacher wrote that the student did a great job at meeting all the criteria in the rubric such as having supporting details and including academic vocabulary followed by next steps to add citations to let the reader know where the information was found. In another grade-eight science task, the student's rating was proficient on using the correct graph to illustrate data based on a given research question. For example, the student analyzed data on where is Down syndrome most prevalent. The teacher provided next steps to ensure that the student makes a connection in his analysis to the hypotheses. In a social studies grade-eight assignment, the teacher used the Common Core writing rubric to grade students on a study of a famous African American. Teachers use Common Core rubrics as well as content-related rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students.

- Teachers and school leaders use common assessments to determine student progress toward meeting goals. For example, teachers administer, beginning, middle, and end-of-the year benchmark assessments in ELA and math. Teachers create action plans for groups of students based on the analysis of the data. For example, to move a group of students from a level three to a level four, teachers plan to provide explicit reading instruction using the RACES strategy and implementation of weekly vocabulary quizzes. In math, to move lower-achieving students toward achieving mastery of expressions and equations they will use a teacher-created checklist. Therefore, common assessments are also used to adjust instruction and curricula.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision

**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles and by facilitating teacher inter-visitations and analysis of student data. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

### Impact

Formal classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers that make clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders meet with teachers to facilitate student data review sessions after benchmark, pre- and post-assessments are administered. *Advance* data is also used to determine what type of supports teachers need throughout the year that is reflected in feedback to teachers with specific suggestions for professional development opportunities based on areas of challenge. Cycles of observations include formal and informal observations as well as options for teachers that are new to teaching. School leaders take into account student performance data and student work to provide actionable feedback to teachers in formal and informal classroom observation reports. Feedback is provided immediately via email with next steps and clear expectations based on student work. For example, one teacher reported that after an informal observation, he immediately received an email with feedback to include more scaffolding in his lessons by using anchor charts for his struggling students. Teachers reported that school leaders provide ongoing and effective feedback.

- School leaders facilitate teacher inter-visitations with a clear focus on school goals and student achievement through the analysis of data. For example, there is a schedule for inter-visitations to develop teacher capacity in the area of student engagement and questioning techniques. In the math department, teachers have conducted inter-visitations and have looked at the performance of students on monthly performance assessments. A teacher wrote in the inter-visitation log that from visiting a colleague, she noted the grouping of students using a four-square model to solve problems and she wondered how she would be able to use the technique for differentiating in her Academic Intervention Services (AIS) class. Teachers reported that opportunities to provide each other with grows and glows have given them an option to receive peer feedback that is collegial and non-threatening.

- In an ELA teacher observation report, the school leader provided the teacher with a list of observable strengths in the lesson, challenges, and a list of suggestions to guide her planning to include student discussion by incorporating think-pair-share, increase student engagement, and improve her rating in the component of engaging students in discussion in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In a social studies observation report, the school leader wrote that the teacher used a single method to check for understanding and in her recommendations, to develop a system for checking for understanding such as including questions that are at a higher level of understanding to challenge students cognitively enabling them to think and reflect to deepen their understanding of the concepts of the lesson. Teachers reported that the feedback they receive from informal and formal classroom observations have provided the support they need to improve their practice.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Teachers' collaborations have strengthened their instructional capacity. Teachers make decisions to incorporate literacy through the content areas and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations to support goals and improve teacher practice. For example, through an initiative, Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC), teacher teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze student writing in the content areas using the New York State Writing Rubric for grades six through eight. Teachers reported that working in a team to analyze student writing in science and social studies allows for ensuring that tasks are aligned to the Common Core. Teachers monitor student progress toward meeting writing standards in all subject areas. A teacher reported that, in science, she reflects on her teaching and incorporates rigorous writing tasks and after analyzing the results with her team, she is able to go back and reteach to help students meet mastery of the writing standards. Thus, professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core.

- Teacher teams meet regularly to engage in inquiry work and collaborate to support student progress toward mastery of the Common Core and strengthen their practice. For example, the math team meets to discuss progress monitoring tools to use, such as the use of a rubric to check students’ calculation, operation, procedural, or lack of conceptual understanding. The team agreed to pilot an Aggressive Monitoring tool to track student progress. In addition, teachers collaborated on making adjustments to the pacing calendar to ensure that pre-tests are administered before introducing a new content. A science team also meets on a regular basis to engage in professional collaborations. Science teachers concluded, based on an analysis of student performance on the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), that students are able to analyze graphs, show evidence of base and claim, and evidence of reasoning. Teachers decided to use the MOSL rubric to guide instruction and strengthen their students’ understanding of the concepts. Thus, teachers use embedded time in their schedule to meet regularly and share best practices to support student growth toward meeting the Common Core and strengthen their practice.

- School leaders and teachers reported that there are structures in place so that there are opportunities for distributive leadership. For example, it is a common expectation that each teacher leads a team in the school. The science teacher reported leading the LDC initiative because she participated in off-site professional development and was eager to share the information with all teachers in the school. As a result, the LDC initiative started in the school and teachers report that this initiative, and other ones, such as Algebra for All have helped teachers strengthen their teaching practices and have more rigor in their assignments. School leaders identify teachers’ leadership capacities and provide opportunities for having structures such as having professional development conducted by teachers every Monday. These built-in leadership structures result in teachers having a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.