Quality Review Report

2017-2018

I. S. 381
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 22K381
2500 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11210

Principal: Victoria Hippolyte Agard

Dates of Review:
May 22, 2018 - May 23, 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. 381 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](http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm).

School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

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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>1.1 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>Well Developed</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 Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Proficient</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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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>Additional Finding</td>
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</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<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>Area of Focus</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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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
The vast majority of classrooms reflect teaching practices that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school’s belief of how students learn best, which includes real-world applications and rigorous group and partner discussions.

Impact
Across classrooms, students produce meaningful work products that reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade eight English Language Arts (ELA) class, the students were divided into three groups according to Lexile levels. Each group was tasked with an activity that required collaboration on analyzing an article about refugee experiences as they are reading a novel about a family that was forced to move to the United States to escape the dangers of the Vietnam War. The teacher posted the main question on the board, “Determine how the experiences that you have read about in your texts are similar to the experiences of Ha and her family.” Students worked collaboratively to complete a follow-up task on chart paper. One of the tasks was to create a plan for encouraging refugee children to attend school by citing evidence from the text. Students were actively engaged in discussion. One student shared with another that no one should be treated like they are not human. In a grade six social studies class, students examined and analyzed how the people of Athens endured war and many forms of government before creating a democracy. Students worked collaboratively in groups to read a scenario and identify the type of government being described. Students had to justify their answer with textual evidence.

- In a grade seven math class, students worked in pairs to solve a real-world problem of predicting what would melt faster, a large block of ice or smaller cubes. Students were provided with manipulatives to complete the task and explained their ideas to each other about how to solve the problem using what they know about surface area, volume, and area. In a grade eight science class, students argued the reliance of different organ systems on each other. To prepare for the discussion, the students completed a graphic organizer describing each organ system. Students defended or rejected the claim that organ systems must work with other organ systems for the human body to function. In a grade seven ELA class, the students learned about citing evidence and making inferences as they had a vigorous debate, led by a pair of students, on whether a famous brand of sneakers should hold its chief officer responsible for the working conditions of his employees. Students read different Lexile-leveled texts to inform their discussion and cite evidence from the text. Students respectfully answered questions and added to their classmates’ claims. For example, one student shared that his classmates that are wearing the brand should consider not wearing it anymore in protest for their working conditions. Activities such as these evidence pedagogical practices aligned to the school’s core belief that students learn best when involved in real-world discussions and tasks.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, students’ work products evidence high levels of student thinking and ownership. Classroom lessons evidence group and whole class discussions such as the examples above. A grade six student work product in which he had to carry out an experiment to determine which gloves would be best to make free throws, evidenced ownership as the student reflected on the weather conditions during the experiment and what he should do next time. Another example of student ownership is the Teacher Student Conference protocol in which students reflect on their progress, meet with the teacher to present their reflections, and get recommendations from the teacher.
Goals and action plans, including professional development (PD), are informed by ongoing data-driven needs assessments. School leaders communicate and include the faculty in creating data-driven goals to improve students’ academic achievement.

**Impact**

While goals and action plans result in improved teacher practice, there is not yet evidence of positive impact on the closing the achievement gap. While the school goals that are understood and supported by the school community, the role of families is not yet embedded in the planning and decision-making process.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate to the staff areas that are in need of attention, such as using assessments to inform instruction. A review of *Advance* data of teacher ratings showed that teachers are improving their practice as evident in ratings of the component of using assessment in instruction of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in which school leaders saw the need for teachers to better assess English Language Learners (ELLs) and provided professional learning about teaching the linguistically diverse child. Teacher observation report data is analyzed regularly by school leaders and shared with teachers. For example, the PD plan includes sessions such as Technology-Based Formative Assessment, Formative Assessment Using Google Translate for ELLs, Tools for Formative Assessments, and Techniques for Checks for Understanding. While school leaders communicate that there is a challenge to address the needs of ELLs and using assessment to inform instruction and action planning, there is lack of evidence that teacher practice has improved across classrooms or has resulted in closing the achievement gap.

- Academic data is monitored using benchmark assessments in English and math. The school goals around academic achievement and instructional foci were determined based on data from high-stakes assessments. The school leaders decided to focus on rigorous instruction in English and math. This goal is monitored using benchmark assessment and classroom observations as well as analysis of student work. However, there is no evidence of teacher goals that support this schoolwide goal. For example, one teacher goal is to improve strategies on working with ELLs and develop multiple entry points for struggling students to access content and acquire language. Another teacher goal is focused on improving student engagement. While there are sessions in the PD plan to inform teachers of schoolwide events and policies and sessions to target the needs of the ELLs, there are missed opportunities for sessions to specifically create goals around rigor in English and math for all learners, monitor their progress, and thus close the achievement gap.

- Based on the New York City School Survey data and other reports, school leaders state on their Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) that it purports to address having a supportive environment by increasing parent involvement by five percent through school activities, monthly meetings, and the use of technology applications. Parents reported that they are informed of school goals such as improving high stake assessments results. While there is evidence that school leaders communicate goals with parents and teachers, such as breakfast with the principal and various workshops to address the social emotional needs of students, there is a lack of evidence that there is effective community and parent involvement in setting school goals and action plans.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. There is strategic integration of the instructional shifts through an interdisciplinary approach and rigorous habits are emphasized in the curricula across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Purposeful planning results in schoolwide coherence in the curricula and the promotion of college and career readiness for all students. Across content areas, students consistently demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core, content standards, and instructional shifts. For example, a grade six unit integrates social studies and ELA. Students collaborate and synthesize their knowledge about Western religions into poems and dialogues. In a series of lessons, students will review the beliefs and ideas that they have learned about Western religions and will work in groups to create a skit where they present their beliefs to someone in their group as if meeting for the first time. Students will write the skit, research, and present it to the class. Another activity is to create *If* poems after reading Rudyard Kipling’s *If* in ELA, where each stanza will correspond to one of the religions they have studied. In another unit, students will read *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park in ELA and will research the conflicts of the Sudanese. Students will review economic concepts such as needs versus wants as well as the civil war in Sudan. These units evidence standards such as to produce clear and coherent writing, determine the meaning of words including academic vocabulary and phrases, and cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly.

- In a science unit, mathematical concepts are embedded. For example, in a grade six unit on the physical properties of minerals, students learn content-specific concepts such as the composition of rocks and minerals. In this unit, students are charged with discussing the properties of minerals such as color, hardness, tenacity, luster, density, and magnetism as well as calculating the density of multiple cubes using the volume formula. In another unit, students will use and analyze the bee population to identify factors and trends for the decline of the bee population. Students are tasked with representing the data using various forms. Content standards are addressed in these units with an emphasis on the instructional shifts such real-life applications, a balance of reading fiction and non-fiction, fluency, and citing textual evidence to support their work. The strategic integration of content and instructional shifts results in coherence across grades and promote college and career readiness for all learners as evident in these units.

- The purposeful integration of content areas emphasizes rigorous tasks and provides coherence of higher-order skills for all learners. For example, in a grade seven geometry unit, students are charged with solving the area of plane figures, volume of prisms, and describing and solving the area of cross sections of prisms. Students demonstrate their thinking by solving real-world problems involving area and surface area of two- and three-dimensional objects. ELLs and students with disabilities are provided with manipulatives and illustrations to provide the necessary scaffolds. In an eighth grade ELA unit about the experiences in the Vietnam War of Ha, the main character in *Inside Out and Back Again*. Students are heterogeneously grouped to explore the refugee experience using evidence from text. Each group is assigned a different task associated with a Lexile-leveled article. One task is to create an action plan to encourage children that are refugees to attend school and provide evidence from the text. Rigorous and higher-order skills are emphasized with proper scaffolds such as these so that all learners to demonstrate their thinking.
Additional Finding

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

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Assessment practices across classrooms consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Assessment practices in classrooms are used to make effective adjustments to meet all students learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses teacher-created common assessments as benchmarks. Student progress is monitored to inform instruction. For example, in ELA, teachers administer a baseline assessment. Teachers created benchmark assessments based on questions from the state assessments. Benchmark assessments are administered quarterly. The data is analyzed by class and subgroups. There has been growth noted for all grade levels. However, the data has yet to show growth and mastery for students with disabilities and ELLs. Teachers use the results of the benchmarks to form groups in their classrooms and to provide individualized attention such as Academic Intervention Services (AIS). In social studies, teachers use the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) to monitor student progress which revealed a need to conduct Document-Based Question (DBQ) professional development (PD) and to create lessons to address this challenge for students.

- Common assessments in mathematics are also administered quarterly after administering a baseline. Student progress is monitored by class and by subgroups. The math common assessments data is analyzed by teachers and school leaders. The results are monitored for ELLs, students with disabilities, and students approaching mastery. Teachers reported that after analyzing the results of the math benchmarks, which overall has shown growth for all grade levels, the results revealed a general challenge for students in geometry. As a result of the analysis, lessons were created to emphasize the pre-requisite standards for geometry and thus have students prepared for these types of questions. Though changes in curricula and instruction are evident, there is yet to be evidence that these adjustments have directly contributed to mastery for all learners including ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Across classrooms teachers’ assessments practices include questioning, exit slips, rubrics, and checklists to check for understanding. Teachers also monitor progress by conferring with students throughout the lesson. For example, in a grade seven math lesson, the teacher charged the students with solving a surface area question about which one, a bigger block of ice or three smaller blocks, will melt faster. Students had to explain their reasoning. The teacher approached a student and after offering feedback provided him with actual wooden cubes to solve the problem and told him to call her if he needed additional help. The teacher realized that most students were having trouble solving the problem and provided more cubes to students. She paused the class and retaught the skill of counting the sides to find the surface area. In a grade eight group ELA lesson, the teacher used a Daily Common Core Skills Checklist as she walked around and checked on the progress of each group. One group’s chart was blank. The teacher asked if they had considered looking at the evidence yet. Students had a discussion about the evidence and then were able to write. Teachers checked for understanding by asking questions, checking in with groups and individual students, and looking at student work.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders steadily articulate high expectations around professional learning and other elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff and provide support. School leaders effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

School leaders promote a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations and provide supports to achieve those expectations. Families play an active role in supporting students in reaching goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations rooted in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. For example, the school is an Algebra for All school, allowing students in eighth grade to take Algebra or to ensure Algebra readiness by the time they enter high school. To that end, the school is purchasing technology to support math instruction. School leaders encourage teachers that do not teach math to attend PD to gain experience in teaching Algebra concepts. As a result of the Algebra for All initiative, one class will be taking the Algebra Regents at the end of the school year. School leaders provided teachers with opportunities to collaborate, share best practices, and conduct intervisitations on using Algebra concepts in their classrooms. A teacher reported and all agreed that school leaders support this initiative and others by attending the workshops with them and providing opportunities to turnkey the training to the staff. The school leaders articulate high expectations and provide supports for teachers to meet those expectations.

- After analysis of Advance data and student work, school leaders concluded that there was a need to support teachers in the using assessments in instruction component of Danielson *Framework for Teaching* specifically in providing effective feedback to students. As a result, school leaders provided training for teachers and introduced the Administrative-Teacher Feedback (ATF) protocol. School leaders adopted this protocol to improve the feedback to teachers on the quality of their feedback to students. For example, one of the protocols read that the teacher used a rubric to evaluate student work; however, the feedback was general, rather than focusing on specific skill. In another protocol, the school leader wrote that the teacher evaluated the student using a common writing rubric; however, the school leader commented on the alignment of the rubric to the assignment based on skills. Schoolwide practices such as the use of this protocol evidence the consistent communication of expectations and the mutual accountability to provide effective feedback to teachers and communicate high expectations.

- School leaders effectively communicate an environment of high expectations and help families support their students. For example, in the beginning of the year, a grade-specific letter is sent to families to outline expectations for attendance, the use of electronic devices, uniform policy, and invitations for upcoming events such as the meet and greet the teacher night and breakfast with the principal. In March, the school leaders went over instructional issues such as ELA state assessment dates and preparation for the assessments as well as an invitation for a separate workshop to inform parents about the NYSELA assessment. Other workshops topics included supporting ELLs and their families as well as parents of students with disabilities. Agendas are translated into different languages. Parents reported and all agreed that these activities as well as invitations to outside workshops for parents such as Parent-You-Niversity, support them in supporting their children. In addition, parents reported that teachers go beyond their call of duty to help their children, such as calling them to let them know that their children have forgotten their homework or staying after-school to meet with parents if they need assistance with helping their children.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborations on grade or content teams as well as interdisciplinary teams focused on coherence across the grades. School leaders embed teacher leadership opportunities in the school.

#### Impact

Professional collaborations result in schoolwide coherence in integration of writing and increased student achievement across all grade and content teams. Effective teacher leadership allows teachers to play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

#### Supporting Evidence

- A grade eight team of ELA and social studies teachers met to discuss alignment of the American History Regents rubric offered in eleventh grade with the school’s expository writing evaluation rubric. The school's interdisciplinary approach to planning and delivery of content has promoted the implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts. For example, a team looked at the language of the rubric and analyzed student writing and ratings according to the eleventh grade Regent's rubric. Teachers noted that students write many details with a lack of evidence and are unable to determine relevant facts. Students are also providing a summary rather than analyzing a specific theses. Both teachers of ELA and social studies collaborated on next steps such as the need to incorporate Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies, such as Cornell notes to organize ideas and implement it across content areas. Another next step will be for the team to teach sophisticated vocabulary by creating synonym charts with academic vocabulary across content areas to display in classrooms. The teachers will also align the school's rubric to the eleventh grade Regents so that all students are exposed to the language and the skills embedded in the rubric. Teacher teams, as reported by teachers, have helped in strengthening teacher capacity which results in coherence to strengthen students’ writing skills.

- Through the use of a schoolwide data analysis protocol, the What?, So What?, and Now What? protocol, the vast majority of teachers meet as a grade level or by departments to analyze student work and design next steps, such as the use of the school’s writing rubric and strategies such as Restate the question, Answer the question, Cite evidence, Explain evidence and how it proves the claim, and Restate the claim (RACER) strategy. For example, a grade six social studies team met to discuss results of a social studies assessment. Teachers note that students need to explain their answers and cite strong evidence. Teachers surmised, based on their findings, that there needs to be more ELA approaches such as the use of RACER. A grade seven team met to analyze the mid-year science assessment. Students had to demonstrate in writing that they understand the difference between a control and experimental group and could read nutritional labels and calculate the amount of fat per serving. The administration of interdisciplinary performance tasks such as these and data analysis by the faculty has led to increased student achievement by grade levels as evidenced in benchmark scores for ELA and math.

- There are embedded structures so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions in the school. For example, teachers attend Algebra for All professional learning sessions and turnkey the training. Teachers take an active role in analyzing data and providing technology training to the staff. Teacher leadership, such as the Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) program is embedded into the school’s schedule so that all students in addition to having lessons that are interdisciplinary, are involved in lessons that specifically challenge students in grade-level performance tasks. For example, in grade six students are challenged to construct a memorial building in honor of famous person. These key decisions positively impact student learning.