Quality Review Report

2017-2018

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K-8 32K384

242 Cooper Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207

Principal: Claudia Harris

Dates of Review:
May 10, 2018 - May 11, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly 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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></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>
<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 Celebration</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### 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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts that foster higher order thinking. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices reflect the belief that students learn best through collaborative groups leading to engagement in discussions. All learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- In a sixth-grade math class, students worked in math centers. The posted objective in the classroom stated in student language, “I can use a coordinate grid to graph and analyze data. I can apply the strategies I learned in Chapter 9 and use them to solve a variety of math problems in our groups.” Students were placed heterogeneously in groups, with entering and emerging ELLs grouped with a partner. Spanish/English dictionaries and math vocabulary packets were used by students as they analyzed ordered pairs and created a line graph. Some of the questions the teacher asked to activate prior knowledge included, “How do we decide which set of information to put on the x-axis? How do we decide which information to put on the y-axis? What are the labels that must be included on your graph? Using the information we learned, do you think you can make your own graphs with information given about an experiment?” Students rotated between four centers, including one center focused on students choosing their own tasks and creating their own line graphs following the prompts on the task card, a center where students read and analyzed data from line plot and line graphs, and a center focused on students identifying a rule in order to solve for a missing number, applying the rule, and then solving to complete the table. The use of collaborative groups resulted in student engagement, as evidenced in student work products and class observations.

- The posted objective for a fifth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson on poetry was, “I can identify the use of similes in a variety of poems and describe how two objects are being compared.” Students were grouped by their literacy performance levels and were reading a variety of poems to identify examples of figurative language, recording those examples on post-its using the stop and jot strategy. Students rotated through four different centers: the onomatopoeia center, the alliteration center, the simile center, and a writing center for students to use figurative language to write their own poems, choosing from forms such as haiku, acrostic, limerick, or cinquain. Guided higher-order thinking questions included, “Why do authors use figurative language? How does figurative language help you understand or connect to writing?” All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

- In a social science class, student groups examined primary source documents and debated the question posted on the smartboard: “Were Lewis and Clark respectful to the Native American they encountered on their journey?” Guided questions included, “Was the United States justified in purchasing territory without the consent of the people living there? Why was the Louisiana Purchase important to the United States? What are some possible results of expansion into the Louisiana Purchase?” Groups were based on similar reading levels, and students used graphic organizers as they examined the primary source documents. Student work products and discussions demonstrated higher-order thinking.
Findings
Infrequent cycles of classroom observations from school leaders have resulted in feedback that is not consistently effective. Feedback to teachers is not yet fully connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric and does not yet articulate clear expectations for teacher practice.

Impact
While feedback is beginning to support teacher development, it is not elevating schoolwide instructional practices or implementing strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Infrequent cycles of classroom observation from school leaders provide occasional feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders did not have a structure to track the progress of completing observations or plan to prioritize observations for teachers needing additional support. Some teachers had the majority of observations completed for the year while others only had one or two completed by the beginning of May. There was evidence through emails and written notes that the leadership team began working with a support coach in April to calendar the remaining observations to ensure the completion of all observations by the end of the year. Due to the infrequent cycles of classroom observations, the limited feedback to teachers is not consistently effective.

- While each item is rated on observation reports, feedback and next steps are not consistently provided or connected to professional goals for teachers. An example of feedback states, “As usual you develop lessons that stimulate students’ motivation to do the work. Students enjoy moving from station and complete the assignment. This review strategy is very effective. Students not only enjoy the work but are continually working at their optimum performance. Even though your pedagogy is to be admired, I would like you to work on developing rubrics that allow students to self and peer assess. Immediate feedback from peers is probably one of the most effective tools in the teacher's tool chest. In addition, task specific rubrics give a clear path to students understanding of what the expectations of quality work are.” Another example of feedback states, “I would like to see the students with limited English to take more risks in speaking to you in English to develop the language. Sentence starters is an example of a strategy you can use. You can also have additional work ready for those students who finish early.” One example of a teacher goal states, “To have students initiate discussions/questions. The action plan states, “Speaking/discussion prompts, lesson activities.” Another teacher goal states, “To increase student reading levels.” The feedback from different school leaders given to teachers is not yet fully connected to the school’s instructional focus or teachers’ professional goals.

- After a change in school leadership during the second semester, the entire leadership team began working with the teacher development evaluation coach from the superintendent’s office. A meeting agenda outlines the goals of the support: “To calibrate a school leader(s)’ perceptions of various levels of teacher practice quality aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, to identify how to use low inference evidence in meaningful feedback and in an observation report., and to identify and plan to implement strategies to support teacher engagement in and ownership of the feedback process.” A review of emails and written feedback revealed that they describe the coach’s work around norming, calibrating ratings, and providing feedback to teachers. As a result of the school leadership recent work with the support coach, feedback to teachers is beginning to support teacher development.
## Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

### Impact

Coherent curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of students has access to the curricula and tasks and is cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core, with the school using Ready Gen and materials from Teachers College in English Language Arts. In math, *Go Math* is in alignment with Common Core. The school also ensures curricula coherence with the New York City (NYC) Social Studies Scope and Sequence and the New York State (NYS) science standards. The pacing of each curriculum is monitored by school leaders and grade level teams and revised, as needed, by teacher teams. As a result of the alignment of curricular documents across grades and content areas, college and career readiness is promoted for all students.

- Curricula documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and the integration of the math and English Language Arts instructional shifts. For example, the lesson objectives for a math lesson state, “The students will be able to determine the experimental probability of an event, to determine the theoretical probability of an event, create tree diagrams, to determine the sample space of a compound event, create a list to determine the sample space of a compound event, and use their knowledge of proportions to make predictions.” The outcomes for an ELA unit state, “Students will be able to identify and discuss various literary devices and elements respectively in literature, such as flashback, metaphor, symbolism, conflict, and dialogue, and create a presentation that showcases their understanding of the characters, plots, symbols and themes of *Monster* as well as the novel’s significance to the 21st century.” There is evidence that the instructional shifts in math and ELA are incorporated across grade and content areas, particularly in the areas of text-based answers and deep understanding.

- Lessons and units are refined for ELLs and students with disabilities. A math lesson describes how comprehensible input is incorporated into the lesson, including ensuring speech is appropriate for students’ proficiency levels. The task is clearly explained, and techniques to support groups of students, including varying levels of ELLs, are present, such as illustrations, modeling of a finished product, personal dictionaries with illustrations, and graphic organizers. In the lesson plan, ELLs are encouraged to draw and write in their primary language. A lesson plan for a second-grade math class describes the grouping of students with disabilities based on their levels of mastery in drawing quick pictures to show addition of 3-digit numbers. Students struggling with drawing quick pictures will draw the same pictures modeled by the teacher, students demonstrating understanding of drawing quick pictures will complete some independent exercises, and students demonstrating mastery will complete independent exercises and an extension activity using index cards to identify a 3-digit number as a sum. Lesson and unit plans demonstrate that curricular and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for ELLs and students with disabilities.
**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**

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Teachers' use of assessments and rubrics provides actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, and teachers consistently make effective adjustments to support all students' learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students in the steps to strengthen their work. One example of feedback from ELA reads, “Good job selecting text evidence. Your inference/explanation sentences can be stronger/show more reflection and thought instead of paraphrase.” Another example states, “You worked to solve multistep problems involving fractions. Next steps: use strategies, such as underlining important information to help you solve the problem. Also, review strategies for equivalent fractions, and simplest form.” A sample ELA rubric evaluates student work in the areas of idea development, content accuracy, organization, sentence fluency, and writing conventions. A math rubric states that a level 3 response, “Demonstrates that the student has made appropriate use of structure and models, shows application of place value and properties of operations to generate equivalent fractions and to compare fractions, demonstrates a complete understanding of the problems, and solutions show use of a detailed model, and indicates a complete mastery of the task.” As a result of the use of rubrics and feedback given to students, students are supported in understanding the expectations for assignments and next steps for improving their academic progress.

- In a math class, students used a checklist to self-assess their group work. Some of the items on the checklist included, “I participated in my group with great interest. I was focused and always on task, I displayed patience and understanding towards my group. I used academic vocabulary. I made three or more contributions to my group. I demonstrated leadership skills. My voice level was acceptable for group work.” Students gave themselves three stars if they participated all of the time, two stars for most of the time, and one star for some of the time. There is also evidence of teachers across grade levels and content areas using trackers such as clipboard charts to monitor the progress of students as they circulated through the classroom. Teachers are able to make effective lesson adjustments, such as incorporating the use of student trackers and progress monitoring during the lesson, across grades and content areas based on the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

- There is evidence of student goals posted in classrooms and in student work portfolios. An example of an individual student goal for science states, “A science goal I need to work on is vocabulary. I will achieve this goal by writing down new vocabulary and study it.” Student goals posted in a class states, “My three math goals are to learn new skills in math, know my multiplication tables, and learn how to divide faster. I will accomplish my goals by paying attention, studying, and writing notes.” The use of student goal setting and self-assessment supports students in developing ownership for their learning and progress.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to all students.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support have increased teachers’ understanding of and accountability for school leaders’ expectations regarding teaching and learning. Teacher teams and staff offer feedback and guidance/support that prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders communicate high expectations through the school's mission statement and vision. The school’s mission states, “The mission is to afford all students the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and personal growth through a rigorous and collaborative environment. The administration, staff, and parents have a genuine commitment to ensuring that every child will master skills aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards. The dedication of school personnel and parents is critical to inspiring in students an appreciation of the need to work diligently to attain personal goals. Through a nurturing and active learning environment, students will develop into conscientious decision makers and active members of their community.” In addition to the school’s written mission and vision, professional learning is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, with professional development sessions supporting the school's focus on teacher collaboration, building trust and understanding, and using assessment in instruction. A review of written documents revealed that school leaders communicate expectations and support staff through professional learning opportunities, such as the implementation of the school-wide behavior system and positive reward system.

- School leaders communicate expectations through the school’s handbook and weekly emails. A review reveals emails include expectations about curriculum, lesson planning, and parent engagement. They also include shout outs to recognize staff members who have assisted with additional responsibilities, such as helping on Saturdays or afterschool. Moreover, communication includes expectations about special education mandates and supports for ELLs. Guidance counselors meet with students to review the high school directory and high school application process. The school also holds an annual career day and workshops for eighth graders about colleges, careers, and technical education opportunities. Staff and students expressed that as a result of communication from school leaders and the school's focus on students’ next educational level, they understand the school’s expectations for teaching and learning.

- Teacher teams and staff communicate high expectations to students through the student and parent handbook. Students are also rewarded for positive behavior through the school’s use of Carter Cash. Teachers communicate with students about their academic progress through grade slips, progress reports, report cards, emails, and class Dojo, and the school has expectations around homework responsibilities. Students cited in particular the feedback teachers provided through grade slips and progress reports. During the larger group meeting, students noted positively how staff communicates expectations about the next academic level and beyond. As a result, students are receiving guidance and support that prepare them for the next level.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Most teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that are loosely and ineffectively connected to school goals, and the inquiry approach in developing across the teams. Teams are analyzing assessment data and student work, but this work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for students.

**Impact**

While teachers are engaged in professional collaborations, the analysis and use of student data and work to inform teacher practice is not fully developed and has limited impact on the progress for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers reported that earlier in the school year, teacher teams were meeting twice a month but are now meeting weekly. Teachers also reported that there is now more work on student inquiry and examining student work, with a focus on assessment and differentiating instruction for groups of students that was not in place earlier in the school year. Teachers now have common planning time each week, but this is a newer structure and they are in the process of developing team meeting norms. According to an updated professional development calendar created by the new principal, there is a focus on curriculum planning and working with the literacy coach on developing Teachers College Reading and Writing workshop units, how to use running records data to inform instruction, and using GoogleDocs to share documents among the staff. Based on a review of documents and meeting agendas and minutes, the professional collaboration structure is in transition and the inquiry approach is developing across teams.

- Teachers participate in staff development that includes building professional learning communities and reviewing student data. A review of documents shows staff were supported by school leaders in using the Ed Performance portal that tracks individual student progress in math and ELA. Teachers were given time to analyze the data, looking at trends and patterns within the data and determining how to provide targeted interventions to address areas of need. There is evidence from agendas and sign-in sheets that multiple professional development sessions took place, but the teachers discussed the data informally and there is no documentation about how the evaluation of data is resulting in targeted supports or improvement in student progress.

- During an observation of the fourth-grade teacher team meeting, members of the team reflected on their previous poetry unit, discussing what students did successfully, still need to learn, and the implications for teacher planning and preparation. The team utilized an agenda template and a graphic organizer to capture their reflections. While teachers discussed that they needed to identify the specific strategies they wanted to use for the next unit, this was not fully captured in the meeting’s agenda or minutes. Teachers also asked during their meeting how they could support the needs of various groups of students, but a review of the written notes found a limited capturing of the team’s conversation. Examples from the team minutes include, “Different students did well on different tasks, still need scaffolding for some kids.” The team minutes identified as action steps, “make poetry booklets or collections, need more review of figurative language.” While there is evidence that teams are meeting and beginning to look at student work using an inquiry process, this is not currently resulting in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for students.