Quality Review Report

2017-2018

23K493
High school 23K493
2021 Bergen Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Heather Newman

Dates of Review:
April 18, 2018 - April 19, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
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

23K493 serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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>
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<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>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders and peers support the development of new and returning teachers with effective formal and informal feedback from the strategic use of frequent cycles of observations that includes the analysis of student work and data. Feedback to teachers accurately captures teachers’ areas of strength, areas for growth, and next steps.

Impact
Feedback articulates clear expectations for improvements in teacher practices and aligns with professional goals for teachers. Feedback also supports the schoolwide instructional focus and uses teacher reflection to promote professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent formal and informal observations and include observations of student work and data in their feedback. In one report, the school leader noted that most students were actively engaged in small group discussion, had established roles, analyzed novels from multiple perspectives, and demonstrated awareness of their success criteria. New teachers are supported by a mentor and Peer Collaborative Teachers (PCTs). PCTs also provide informal low inference feedback to teachers and organize inter-visitations to support teachers in self-identified areas of weakness. Teachers use feedback from leaders and peers to reflect on their practice individually and in teams. A teacher’s reflection on the impact of a lesson on isolation in society shares that the lesson was difficult for some students, as the concept of isolation was new. The reflection includes plans to help students make connections by incorporating familiar songs that express feelings of isolation.

- Leader feedback in observation reports is presented using a schoolwide template that organizes feedback under the headings areas of strength, areas for growth, and potential steps for development. In one report, leader feedback to the teacher identified “providing actionable feedback to students” as an area of strength, “capturing data of student content mastery” as an area for growth, and recommends that the teacher “create a table or spreadsheet to document students’ growth and next steps during conferences” as a potential step for development. Across the vast majority of observations reviewed, leaders utilized this format to articulate clear expectations for improvements in each teacher’s practice.

- Across the vast majority of observations reviewed, potential steps for development align to the instructional domain of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This alignment supports the school’s instructional focus and schoolwide professional goals for teacher improvement in this domain. Steps for development consistently support improvements in using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, and using assessment in instruction. Examples of identified next steps across observations include recommendations to use the Hess’ Cognitive Rigor Matrix to develop questions, use close reading strategies to support student comprehension, use a tracker to capture student learning during an assignment, and to implement a summative assessment to ensure students have met the learning objective.
Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment

**Rating:** Developing

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**Findings**

Across some classrooms, teachers use and create rubrics and grading policies aligned to the curricula and New York State Regents expectations. Teachers inconsistently incorporate multiple checks for understanding and do not consistently provide opportunities for self-assessment.

**Impact**

Rubrics and written comments from teachers inconsistently include next steps, limiting access to actionable feedback for some students. Checks for understanding do not consistently lead to adjustments to instruction or student learning, thereby hindering their ability to make improvements on future tasks.

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**Supporting Evidence**

- Although some teachers have begun to use rubrics to analyze student data and align student performance with New York State Regents scoring requirements, teachers inconsistently provide students with rubrics or written next steps. Graded student work samples reviewed were inconsistently accompanied by rubrics or written feedback. One student work sample graded as an A minus was not accompanied by a rubric and included the feedback, “Almost all correct, Please write in full sentences and work slowly.” A student notebook included a notebook check rubric with a score of 20 out of 20, but did not highlight any particular areas on the rubric and had no comments in the identified “Teacher Comment” section. Students shared that “sometimes teachers give rubrics” and that teachers review errors with the whole class and share verbal feedback during student conferences. This lack of consistency and clarity in feedback to students hinders their ability to make improvements in future tasks.

- Some teachers have begun to incorporate checks for understanding into their lessons. In a math classroom, the teacher observed students during group work and realized they were having difficulty in using the calculator. The teacher called for attention and reviewed the steps to use the calculator, but did not follow up to ensure that students understood and made the necessary adjustments. In an English class, the teacher used the previous day’s entry tickets to group students by performance level and assign question prompts. However, students appeared confused about the process and expected product for the day’s lesson. Students continued to pose clarifying questions throughout the lesson.

- Across classrooms, teachers provided limited opportunities for students to self-assess and to check the understanding of their peers. In one class, students participated in a pro and con debate on whether *To Kill a Mockingbird* should be read in schools. Students used debate notes, Cornell notes, and “observer” note-taking tools to organize their own learning and assess debate presentations. Students recorded the presenter’s use of evidence and completed a ballot and comment sheet. In this class, the teacher provided students with the opportunity to present their learning, and assess, compare, and evaluate the work of their classmates. The level of student assessment in this lesson was not evident in other classes, hindering students opportunities to self-assess and be aware of their next learning steps.
Additional Finding

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

Purposeful decisions ensure that instructional objectives coherently align to content and Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits by utilizing pre-Advanced Placement (pre-AP) strategies to incorporate the instructional shifts and requiring students to provide text-based answers and to write from sources.

Impact

Emphasis on rigorous habits and pre-AP strategies build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Faculty use a schoolwide lesson-planning template that identifies the learning objective with a students will be able to (SWBAT) format. Most teachers align identified learning objectives to Common Core Learning Standards in their planning documents. In a statistics lesson plan, the learning objectives indicate that students will be able to create linear regressions, calculate and plot residuals, and interpret the residual plot to determine if the model is a good fit. This plan identifies the New York State standards of interpreting linear models, making inferences, and justifying conclusions. A science plan indicates that students will be able to create molecular structures and identify the properties using their knowledge of the homologous series. The plan identifies Common Core and New York State Science Learning Standards.

- School leaders and faculty have purposefully selected curricula that support AP coursework and introduced it into the grades nine and ten curricula. This includes an AP seminar course for all grade nine students. Across content areas, teachers embed selected pre-AP reading strategies in lessons to prepare students for AP courses across the grades. These strategies include chunking of text, close reading, metacognitive markers, summarizing, and use of an overview, parts, title, interrelationships, and conclusion (OPTIC) graphic organizer. Plans across contents include the OPTIC strategy to analyze graphic and visual images as forms of text.

- Pre-AP strategies support schoolwide shifts in planning math and English Language Arts (ELA) instruction. Lesson plans include academic tasks designed to increase math fluency and the use of text-based answers, as well as engage students in writing from sources. For example, an English lesson on transcendentalism includes a think, pair, share activity and the chunking of text from Henry David Thoreau’s Where I lived and What I lived For. In this lesson, students are required to analyze, paraphrase, and make connections by explaining the text’s relevance to modern American life. This lesson also requires students to list sources for specific quotes and general ideas noted in their responses. A math lesson on regressions includes plans to model and practice the use of a digital and physical graphing calculator to increase students’ fluency and accuracy with the tools. The lesson also includes a fluency practice activity to be assigned as homework. Across classes, a focus on articulated pre-AP strategies aligns to the Common Core and emphasizes rigorous habits for students.
### Additional Finding

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

Teaching practices across classrooms align to an articulated belief that students learn best in a nurturing environment with a relevant curriculum. Across classrooms, teachers incorporate pre-AP strategies and scaffolds to consistently provide multiple entry points for diverse learners.

#### Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* so that most students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, engage in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students were organized for collaboration, peer support, and sharing. Teachers encouraged students to share their work and ask each other questions. Students agreed or disagreed with classmates and teachers respectfully. Teachers incorporated issues, materials, and tasks that provide real life examples to engage students and help them make connections. In an English lesson on *Othello*, the teacher engaged students in an entry assignment that asked them to respond to a recent Twitter comment made by a famous performer. The comment stated, “Fear often causes people to be manipulative.” In this class, students shared their quick-write responses, related it to their text, and responded freely to the opinions shared by their classmates. Across classes, teachers provided positive learning environments and relevant material for students.

- Across content areas, teachers scaffold student learning using a variety of pre-selected reading strategies. Teachers use collaboration, chunking of text, visuals, and graphic organizers to increase comprehension of difficult texts and ideas. In an AP English classroom, students read paragraphs from texts by Shakespeare in small groups and worked together to uncover the main idea and discuss the author’s use of language. In this class, students used visual images, quotes, and a summary to express the main idea of their paragraph. In a science classroom, small groups of students worked together to annotate a scientific text and create a poster on two carbon-based molecular structures. In this activity, students created visual representations of the molecular structures, identified their components, and compared and contrasted the structures using T-charts, lists, and Venn diagrams. Across classrooms, purposeful use of reading strategies and organizers supported student engagement in challenging tasks.

- There was evidence of the use of visual and audio tools to provide entry for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Teachers use a variety of media formats to display images and share information with students. In a math class, the teacher projected an interactive graphing calculator to demonstrate the appropriate use of the tools and formulas. In a seminar course, the teacher displayed a political cartoon that referenced internet safety. Student groups completed assigned sections of an OPTIC organizer and shared their responses with the class. The teacher combined the group responses in a class chart to be used as a resource to complete the conclusion section of the organizer. Teachers across contents ask students to respond to visual content using the OPTIC graphic organizer. Teachers in most classes use visual images to increase student understanding of topics, participation in tasks, and demonstration of higher order thinking.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently provide training and communicate high expectations to the entire staff via professional development, observation feedback, and faculty meeting agendas. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students regarding graduation and New York State Regents expectations.

Impact

School leaders have a system in place to hold faculty and staff accountable for teaching and learning expectations. Ongoing feedback, guidance, and exposure to college and careers prepare students for the next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff use school faculty and content team meetings to provide training and support to teachers. A review of agendas demonstrates that meetings focus on topics to support school goals and student improvement. An October 2017 agenda focused on developing effective quick-write topics and using metacognitive markers to assist students in analyzing and discussing text and a November 2017 agenda focused on effective pre-AP strategies. An April 2018 agenda included objectives to determine the effectiveness of metacognitive markers and deepen student understanding of math concepts. Leadership holds faculty accountable for expectations through weekly outlines submitted by all teachers that include the lesson topics, Common Core Learning Standards, and assessments for each day of the week.

- Formal and informal observation feedback focuses on the instructional domain of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and identifies clear and specific next steps for teachers. Feedback to teachers is time-bound and identifies follow up observations and expected dates for implementation. One observation report shared expectations for the implementation of pre-AP strategies and read, “Please implement the following changes by December 7, 2017.” Another observation asked the teacher to use a tracker to capture student progress and read, “Please implement the following changes by April 9, 2018.” Clear and time-bound feedback holds teachers accountable for expectations.

- Teacher teams and staff clearly articulate expectations for coursework, course completion, and graduation expectations, preparing students for their next level of learning. Teachers prepare, disseminate, and review course syllabi with students. Syllabi templates include the course rationale, aims and outcomes, and unit overviews and requirements. Students acknowledge understanding of the syllabi by signing a page that reads, “I have read the above course outline and shared it with my parent or guardian. I understand what is expected of me on a daily basis.” Faculty support and monitor student progress toward graduation, including course pass rates, New York State Common Core Regents pass rates, and applications to college. Faculty and staff encourage students to strive for Common Core pass rates. A comparison of 2016-2017 Common Core pass rates to pass rates at the time of the review revealed an increase from 11 percent to 30 percent. In addition, 80 percent of the current seniors had applied to college and 72 percent had already received acceptance notices.
Additional Finding

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations on content-based teams. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work samples.

Impact

Teacher inquiry promotes the achievement of school goals, strengthens teacher planning and the implementation of pre-AP strategies across contents. Teachers develop and share new instructional strategies that typically result in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet on vertical content teams twice weekly and once per week as a faculty for targeted professional development. During team meetings, teachers look at student work and teacher practices with a focus on a particular problem of practice. Teams follow an established agenda and use a protocol to structure the sharing of student work and data. During a math team meeting, teachers used a protocol to analyze student work and answer the question, “Are metacognitive markers working?” Teachers examined student responses to an extended math question and shared their noticings, questions, and the implications for instruction. Teachers shared that collaboration on vertical teams is building coherence across the grades as they plan and implement lessons to teach pre-AP strategies schoolwide. A focus on AP strategies aligns teacher collaboration to school achievement goals and promotes the implementation of the Common Core.

- Teacher teams consistently analyze student data on content-based inquiry teams to answer the questions, “How is this data currently used?” and “How can this data be used more effectively?” Teachers use the data from content assessments to identify topics for re-teaching, additional lessons, and adjustments to the pacing. For example, math teachers analyzed data from unit tests to inform topics to include in do nows in succeeding units. Science teachers conducted an item skills analysis of part two of the science Regents assessment to identify student misconceptions and adjust lessons. The science team inquiry notes include adjustments to emphasize keywords in science questions and to teach students selective underlining and notetaking. Teachers on the math team used the information gathered during the analysis of student use of metacognitive markers to plan a follow-up metacognitive marker lesson that would include a model and timed student practice. Teachers on content teams make data informed improvements to their instructional practices.

- Teachers shared that consistent analysis of assessment data and student work has resulted in progress for students. Based on an analysis of student responses to extended prompts, more students are attempting to complete extended response questions across content areas. In addition, students across contents and grade levels are utilizing metacognitive markers and annotation strategies at higher levels. For example, during the math team meeting, teachers noted that all students attempted the extended response question and 75 percent of the student responses demonstrated use of the new metacognitive markers.