Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Academy of Urban Planning and Engineering

High school 32K552

400 Irving Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237

Principal: Jorge Sandoval

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

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
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

#### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>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>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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
</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>
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</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<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>
</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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</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>
## Area of Celebration

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

### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are consistently implemented in the school community.

### Impact

Teacher collaborations on both vertical and horizontal teams strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers and promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Through teacher-leadership participation in the instructional leadership team, teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- The science and social studies team met to review different strategies that would support student understanding of tier-two vocabulary words. Tier-two vocabulary words were identified as an area of need after the team reviewed common assessment data. Team members reviewed norms and the protocol they would use during this meeting. First, teachers conducted an individual review of each strategy and identified which one they preferred. This was followed by a discussion in which team members paired up and shared their opinions on each strategy. As a team, they decided upon the Frayer Method, which is a graphic organizer that includes providing non-examples, as the strategy that would be used across all social studies and sciences classes. Several teachers shared that they were unfamiliar with this strategy and unsure how it would be taught in class. The model teacher that was facilitating the meeting shared that he would model it in his classroom for other teachers. Therefore, teacher teams promote school goals and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers.

- Teachers strengthen their instructional capacity through team-based collaborations. During a whole faculty meeting, a writing strategy was shared that would be utilized schoolwide. One teacher reported that during a team meeting it was proposed that math teachers use this writing strategy in designing exit tickets. Additionally, social studies and science teachers decided to use the strategy as well. This resulted in the adoption of this strategy for strengthening writing in content areas across all math, social studies and science teachers. All teachers reported that team collaborations consistently support their growth as teachers through the introduction of new strategies and planning lessons together.

- The instructional leadership team includes model teachers from across content areas. This team works with the principal to determine and deliver professional development to the faculty. Additionally, the teacher leaders had a voice in determining that Using Assessment in Instruction, a component in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, would be a focus for walkthroughs and inter-visitations. Also, teacher voice led to the decision that tier-two vocabulary words would be a focus for the school. As a result, the school has adopted several strategies to support student growth in understanding these words. Therefore, teachers have voice in key decisions throughout the school.
### Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when text is accompanied with opportunities for student collaboration, inquiry, and discussion that deepens learning. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula; however, strategic supports and extensions are not yet consistently evident.

### Impact

Students across classrooms produce meaningful work products, though in some cases, there are missed opportunities for students to engage in student-to-student discussions and deepen their learning. While all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, engage in appropriately challenging tasks there are missed opportunities to extend the learning for some students.

### Supporting Evidence

- During a grade-ten English lesson, students engaged in a discussion protocol centered on identifying imagery in *Romeo and Juliet*. One student stated that picking up the knife was an example of imagery from the text. The teacher followed up by asking, “What was she feeling when that happened?” Once a student answered a question, the teacher asked another question. Students responded directly to the teacher’s questions, rather than building upon each other’s answers. In a grade-nine English lesson, a student facilitated a whole-class discussion on *Othello*. One student stated that Othello did not respect women. This lead to a discussion in which students referred back to the text to support their responses. Additionally, in a grade-nine Global Studies class, students annotated a text on the impact Mansa Musa had on the Muslim world. Students used their annotations to engage in a discussion that required them to cite textual evidence to support their responses. Therefore, teaching practices across classrooms use texts and discussion protocols to engage students in learning. However, there were some missed opportunities to extend the discussion or allow for student-to-student discussion.

- During a Geometry lesson, students worked collaboratively to determine the length of an arc when provided with the angle, measure of the arc, and the radius. Students created their own circles and measurements which allowed each group to have a different problem. One student explained to his group how he used the area to find the arc. While students had the opportunity to collaborate to solve math problems, there were missed opportunities to deepen student thinking. For example, during an Algebra lesson, students selected one of four problems to complete. One group of students shared they could not decide on one problem so they were each doing a different problem and then sharing their answers. However, in other groups, students selected the problem they were most comfortable with and did not complete additional problems. This led to some groups completing a problem and waiting for the end-of-class share out rather than attempting additional problems. Therefore, there is evidence of students engaging in inquiry tasks and collaborating to solve math tasks, yet not always leading to depth of learning.

- Across classrooms, teachers provide text and dictionaries in both English and Spanish to support ELLs and provide access to the tasks. For example, in a grade-ten class students received both the English and Spanish version of *Romeo and Juliet*. In most classrooms, the learning objective is also presented in Spanish and bilingual students are asked to translate for other students. While this approach supports ELLs, it also limits opportunities for some students to be challenged further as they support their peers with translation. Additionally, students are provided with leveled texts and additional teacher support as a scaffold. While this approach provides access for all students, it can limit students’ ability to complete tasks independently and extend their thinking.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts such as academic vocabulary. Curricular and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Decisions about curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members ensure a diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, a Geometry lesson plan includes a task in which students underline key words from a Regents problem and explain to each other how they would solve the problem. Additionally, students are to demonstrate deep knowledge by creating their own problems in which they determine the arc of an angle. In an Algebra lesson plan, students will be asked to demonstrate deep understanding by choosing the best strategy to use when solving quadratic equations.

- Review of curricular documents reveals the integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, a grade-nine English unit plan includes asking students to write an argumentative essay which includes using evidence from a text to support their arguments. Additionally, reading materials in that unit represent an equal amount of informational and literary texts. A grade-ten Earth Science lesson plan includes a task that requires students to make a claim and support it with textual evidence. Additionally, there is evidence of a balance of literary and nonfiction texts and academic vocabulary words included in curricular documents.

- Teachers differentiate curricula and academic tasks so all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are cognitively engaged. A review of curricula reveals schoolwide supports such as pre-teaching vocabulary, leveled exit tickets, and heterogeneous groupings that allow students to support each other. For example, a grade-ten English unit plan includes scaffolding of abstract concepts by providing sentence frames. Additionally, ELLs receive translated documents and bilingual dictionaries. A grade-eleven English lesson plan for an Integrated Co-Teaching class includes a tablet for some students and strategic student groups that will receive additional teacher support to complete the task of self-assessing their writing to determine whether the textual evidence supports the central idea.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback through glows, grows, and next steps that students use to improve their work. Results of mock-Regents and Regents exams are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics to rate essays and provide actionable, written feedback to students. Some examples of feedback on students’ essays draws attention to the use of textual evidence to support their arguments, as well as clear connections to their claim. Next steps include presenting a counter-claim and strengthening their argument with additional analysis. Feedback offered to students in math conclude that students answered a problem correctly but point out that they did not clearly explain their answer. Additional examples of feedback include, “push your writing forward with textual evidence that confirms what you believe,” “clearly identify your audience so you land on the target,” and “consider whether each sentence accomplishes your purpose or is overdone.”

- Students came to a quick consensus that they receive written, actionable feedback on their work. Students also shared that teachers provide verbal feedback as a follow-up to written feedback. One student reported that she is earning higher grades after her teacher offered written feedback about how she could strengthen her essay by expanding on her analysis of the text. She said, “Now, whenever I present an idea, I expand on it, rather than just stating the point.”

- The results from common assessments such as mock-Regents and Regents exams are used to adjust curricula and instruction. For example, the June item analysis and fall mock-Regents for Algebra were used to determine that students struggled with completing constructed-response questions. Teachers adjusted their curricula and instruction to include a constructed-response question as the beginning task in their classes. Additionally, common assessment results are used to support student groupings and scaffolds in classrooms. For example, the results of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test are used to group ELLs and identify appropriate supports for them in their classrooms. Teachers have access to all common assessment results via an online platform which enables them to consistently adjust instruction based on student learning needs. Additionally, common assessment results are used to recommend students for extended learning time and the target their specific needs.
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 convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and weekly memos. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders support teachers’ understanding and awareness of expectations regarding teaching and learning. Communication from school leaders and teachers through an online gradebook system and other strategies provides frequent opportunities for families to understand progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. Teachers receive a faculty handbook covering a wide variety of expectations ranging from day-to-day professional conduct as well as guidelines for instructional planning and expectations for professional commitment to which all faculty members are to adhere. Some of those professional commitments deal with treating all students in a warm and respectful manner, ongoing reflection and professional growth, and engaging students in higher-order thinking. Sections in the handbook cover topics such as the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, assessment policy and practices, and creating a classroom environment that supports student learning. School leaders provide support and resources that enable staff to meet high expectations.

- Weekly memos reinforce high expectations and identify professional learning opportunities and supports for staff. For example, one memo includes the schoolwide instructional goals around writing strategies and assessment criteria and how engaging in the inquiry approach will support those goals. Other memos remind staff about the importance of maintaining an online gradebook, professional learning opportunities provided by staff during lunch, and commendations for various staff members.

- School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations for students’ college and career readiness with families. Parents came to quick consensus that the online gradebook and progress reports provide them with helpful information regarding how their children are performing. Additionally, parent workshops are held repeatedly where school staff guide parents in understanding the college application process and the financial aid process. Parents and students also attend college tours and learn about college expectations.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Evaluative and non-evaluative classroom observations result in written feedback for teachers that makes clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them and elevates schoolwide instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific, detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps, along with glows and grows, are included at the close of the observation reports. In addition, school leaders shared a strategy of observation cycle planning that targets teachers based on individual need. This includes both evaluative and non-evaluative observations.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures strengths, challenges, and next steps teachers should take to improve their practice and impact student success. For example, one report details the lack of academic rigor in the lesson. Feedback offered to this teacher includes planning a debate on the topic rather than having students restate main points from their notes. In another report, the teacher is commended for creating a positive classroom environment. Next steps included assessing students throughout the lesson to target students who need additional support. Also, an article was provided to support the teacher’s implementation of the feedback. Additionally, a review of observation reports reveals that teachers are encouraged to conduct intervisitations to observe specific strategies that were recommended for them. Therefore, feedback provided to teachers articulate clear expectations and supports teacher development.

- In addition to the reports resulting from evaluative classroom observations, school leaders and teacher leaders on the instructional leadership team visit classrooms and provide feedback. For example, the instructional leadership team observed all teachers to look for evidence of assessment in the classroom. Teachers received verbal feedback from the instructional leadership team on student self-assessment, checks for understanding, and types of questions asked to elicit student understanding. While feedback from non-evaluative observations is verbal, teachers came to a quick consensus on the usefulness of it to improve their practices.