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

Young Women'S Leadership School Of Brooklyn serves students in grade 6 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>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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</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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<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>Area of Celebration</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 Focus</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

Quality Indicator: 1.4 Positive Learning Environment
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
Through the advisory program, school leaders, advisors, students and parents work collaboratively to guide the academic and personal growth of students. The school community strategically aligns professional development to supports for family outreach and enhancing student-learning experiences.

Impact
Students are known well, and there is strategically aligned professional learning and family outreach. Students are celebrated for adopting academic and personal behaviors of college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Every student is in an advisory group, comprised of 12 to 17 students, that meets every morning for a check-in with a focus on ensuring that students adhere to daily work habits, such as attendance, wearing of the school uniform, use of their planner, and that students have their “golden ticket,” a regular communication log that goes between home to school. Advisory groups also meet two to three times a week for community-building circles using the Circle Forward curriculum to help students build communication and collaboration skills, self-regulation, and self-advocacy skills in dealing with issues that arise among students and between students and adults, including family members and school staff. Occasionally, there is also purposeful time set aside for students to set their own agenda for advisory or reflect on their time-management and use of their student planner, resulting in students adopting effective academic and personal behaviors.

- School leaders and staff ensure purposeful pairing of students and advisors as well as additional mentoring for students. The group formations are a collaborative effort with input from teachers and providers to provide students personalized supports. Students shared that advisory is an important time for them to focus on their personal development and get social-emotional support at school. As one student shared, “The relationship with your advisor is one of the best. They know you and what’s best for you. Through advisory meetings you learn that you can be open with them and get the help you really need.” The school also has an attendance team that meets weekly and is comprised of paraprofessionals, administrators, guidance staff and teachers who use a comprehensive data tracker to plan next steps for students. The team then works with the student, his/her advisor and family to further personalize supports. As needed, there are also one-on-one meetings for parents with school guidance staff, as well as workshops to help them understand how to listen to and provide social-emotional support to their children.

- Parents also praised Pledge Day, a weekly assembly hosted by a different grade of students. This weekly event allows families, students and school staff to come together to publicly praise students for progress in academics and attendance, and for sharing other student-selected milestones, such as persevering through grief after the death of a parent. Pledge Day assemblies align to the school’s core belief that, “A young woman leader respects herself and others, strives for personal and academic excellence, and is committed to service that affects positive social change.”

- The school staff shared that there are strategically aligned professional learning sessions to guide supports for students, such as Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Support, Rethinking Discipline, and the Circle Forward curricula. One teacher also praised the support that staff has received in helping students to process their responses to police brutality and race relations. “They helped us with how, we as a staff, can have conversations about police, race, sexuality, and identity how our beliefs shape our personas as educators.”
Area of Focus

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

Findings

While teacher teams are not yet inquiry-based, teachers engage in professional collaborations. During these collaborations, teachers analyze their own students’ work, but are not yet engaged in looking at student work for students whom they share or for a focused group of students.

Impact

Collaborations are resulting in collegial sharing and improved teacher practice, but not yet increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- At a vertical English Language Arts (ELA) teacher team meeting, observed during the review, teachers analyzed student work that they brought with them, individually noting what students in “low,” “medium” and “high” student groups achieved, and what the instructional next steps might be to improve reading levels for students. Each teacher each brought student responses to literature either from either independent reading done at home focused on analyzing the setting, character analysis from a class novel, or student work done during a reteach lesson on writing summaries and/or using voice in their writing. Teachers looked at their own work only, and shared possible next steps that they might take in their own classrooms. While this demonstrates a professional collaboration that is loosely connected to the school’s goals, the teachers did not engage in a structured, inquiry-based approach to analyzing the work of students for whom they share.

- Previous team meeting minutes demonstrate that the above-mentioned team decided in November to focus on improving reading. Teachers individually selected various strategies to implement, including close reading strategies, use of checklists, book marks for independent reading, and/or stop and jots. Teachers also participated in intervisitations with a focus on reading strategies and came up with new strategies to implement. While the teachers remain focused on reading, teachers are not tracking the success of strategies over time to determine their impact on teaching and learning.

- Though individual teachers at the meeting focused on needs of their own low, middle and high student groups, there was not a clear connection to individual student reading levels or other measures of progress for the student groups, or ways that teachers would track the efficacy of discussed strategies that teachers use to meet student-learning needs. In team meeting records, observable ways that teachers track progress toward goals for groups of students was not evidenced.

- The school is has formed a special education focused inquiry team. They have not yet begun to engage in inquiry-based collaborations to analyze student work or data.

- In the question and answer session with teachers, teachers on teams beyond the ELA team observed shared that some teams, such as the social studies team, focuses on instructional strategies that they are implementing, and the results from the administration of assessments to see if the strategies are having their intended effect. On this team, the teachers are also looking at strategies and progress within their own classrooms, rather than the students who they share or on whom they are focused. Other teachers from other teams were not able to articulate ways that they track progress toward goals for groups of students.
Findings
The curricula is culturally responsive and aligns to the Common Core, with a focus on writing arguments to support claims with text evidence and making sense of problems and persevering in solving them. Rigorous tasks and college level skills are embedded in lesson plans and provide access for all students.

Impact
The school’s curricula are coherent, accessible, and promotes college readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans and units demonstrate uniformity in planning with teachers often using a common template or including the same elements in lesson plans and units. The school staff has created curriculum guides that ensure vertical alignment in units planned in subject areas from grades six to twelve by demonstrating attention to targeted Common Core and content standards, and including essential questions, topics and skills of focus and formative and summative assessments. Units and lessons, such as literacy units and writing tasks in the content areas, focus on students writing from sources to demonstrate valid reasoning and provide text-based evidence. In math units focus on building coherence across the grades by having students make sense of problems, and persevere in solving them. Across the content areas, including math, units provide opportunities for students to practice close reading skills, and include purposeful attention to provide opportunities for them to practice speaking and listening and develop note-taking skills necessary for college readiness. Across the grades and subjects teacher teams have created standards-based assessment criteria to clearly define what it means to exit a grade level and attain enduring understandings and key skills to be college ready. Furthermore, lesson plans and units grow in complexity in how students cite evidence from text to supporting an argument in ELA, social studies and science. Teachers effectively use these criteria so that there is coherence across the grades and subjects.

- Texts are chosen to reflect the interests and cultures of young women from diverse backgrounds to make certain that students practice higher-order skills and demonstrate their thinking in response to not only Shakespeare, but also by using texts that are responsive to student community. As a teacher shared, “A core tenant for us is creating curricula that has issues that are important to girls who are in my class. We want them to feel represented in the literature. We select texts that include issues that are specific to Black and Yemeni students. We added Does My Head Look Big in This?, by Abdel-Fattah to address pressures that Yemeni girls have about school and marriage.” Another teacher shared that she added Americanah by Ngoza Adichie, a complex narrative about a Nigerian immigrant who dates men of different races and has to grapple with what it means to be Black in America. Teachers effectively align tasks to these texts, such as literary analysis essays, that require students to practice Common Core standards including developing topics with concrete details, examples, and quotes from the text, and producing writing of length, that requires planning, revising, editing and trying a new approach.

- Lesson plans and student work samples demonstrated embedded supports, such as paragraph templates, vocabulary and transition word supports, and self- and peer-writing analysis sheets to ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs must demonstrate their thinking in ELA, science and social studies courses. In math tasks across the grades, students must agree or disagree with math statements, as seen in a sixth grade math lesson plan on positive and negative numbers in the contexts of weather and money. In this math lesson, as in others, students must demonstrate their reasoning in writing and in conversation with their peers.
Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

Findings

Teachers use the workshop model with a focus on 25 minutes of student work-time each period and provide scaffolds and supports such as peer discussions, manipulatives, and anchor charts to offer multiple entry points for students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact

All students are engaged in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the belief that students learn best when they have substantial work time within the workshop model to practice skills and strategies that allow them to demonstrate high level thinking, in both written work products and discussions with peers. Across the grades and subjects, teachers provide students with 25 minutes of worktime, the majority of the period. There were a few instances during the review where the teacher-led portion of the workshop model did not allow students to engage in work independently for the full 25 minutes expected by school leaders, but more often than not, student work time dominated the class period. In an eighth grade math class on linear relationships, students spent the majority of the period working through an investigation packet, some independently and some in partnerships. Similarly, in a Global History class, small groups of students worked together to use primary sources to explore the positive and negative effects of industrialization, with little interruption from the teacher, as students discussed and wrote about the documents together. These tasks aligned to the instructional shifts, and allowed students to produce meaningful work products.

- In several classes teachers modeled expectations for students or provided models for students to explore before they set off to work, evidence of alignment of teaching practices to the opening component of the workshop model. In an eighth grade ELA class, the teacher put up a sample opening paragraph for a thematic essay, modeled questioning the text to uncover ways that the writer structured his paragraph, and modeled elements of the text outlined in an aligned rubric. This allowed students to prepare for their own thematic essays for their book clubs and explore in their small groups ways that the writer used transitions and quotations from the text to support his thesis. Similarly, in a pull-out class for students beginning to learn English, the teacher created independent tasks for students that aligned to the tasks and topics in their ELA classes, and included brief models for students so they could spend their time working independently on tasks that were appropriately challenging for them and aligned to their broader coursework.

- Across classrooms, access to the thinking of peers was the most commonly observed scaffold. Vocabulary supports, the use of math tools, such as rulers and calculators, and manipulatives in science, were in use to ensure that students with disabilities and ELLs had access to challenging tasks. Accountable talk stems and use of anchor charts to help students work independently or in groups was common across classes, supporting students in demonstrating their thinking. In a ninth grade Living Environment class, students were aided with a reference picture on the board, guided notes, science tools, and access to peers as they learned how to take measurements with different lab apparatus. In a sixth grade ELA class, students were able to use a teacher’s model literary analysis essay, and a feedback checklist, to guide their peer editing conversations. Further, anchor charts ensure that their essays, and the essays of their peers, were of high quality and met the Common Core Standards as they worked.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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</table>

Findings

Teachers give common assessments across the grades, and check for student understanding during their lessons.

Impact

There are inconsistencies in how teachers use the data to make adjustments to respond to student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school community uses common assessments, such as mock Regents exams, running records to assess reading progress, and pre- and post-unit assessments across the subject areas. Teachers use an online platform to record individual and class level data, and also conduct item skills analyses of tests, such as an item skills analysis observed for a June Geometry Regents' exam, used to plan for an afterschool re-teach. While teachers consistently use common assessments to measure student progress, there is a lack of consistency in how teachers use the data gathered from assessments to adjust curricula and instruction.

- In the question and answer session, teachers across the grades and subjects, shared inconsistencies about how they use common assessment data to make adjustments. In social studies, teachers have created baseline, midterm, and end-of-unit assessments, but also rely heavily on the eighth grade ELA exam to group students. Notes from social studies team meetings demonstrate that teachers are examining assessments for what students do well, and what they need to work on. There was little evidence from planning documents, such as lesson plans and units, that teachers used these noticing to adjust curriculum and instruction. In science, teachers shared that they use the Next Generation Science Standards to track progress, and look for growth in the standards across the grades. Science lesson plans however, showed that some teachers used current reading levels, rather than progress in the science standards to track students, demonstrating inconsistencies in assessment practices. In response to a question about how teachers use common assessments to make adjustments to the curricula, one teacher shared, "Inquiry is in year two for us, so putting the strategies and transfer skills into units is the focus of our work this year. We are mid process."

- Across classes, teachers use questioning and conferencing to check for understanding, though few teachers were observed tracking student thinking, or making on-the-spot adjustments. In a sixth grade ELA class, the teacher engaged students in self- and peer-assessment during the period, while the teacher made on-the-spot adjustments by providing comments on students’ online writing tasks so that they could see her comments as they worked. There was also an exit ticket for the students and teacher to gauge the students’ next steps. This level of student self-assessment and use of on-the-spot adjustments from teachers was not seen in other classrooms. In several classes, the teacher asked questions or clarified thinking for groups of students as they worked, but made no note of student thinking. In another class, the teacher noted that a few groups were not doing their work correctly, and asked them to stop working and wait for new directions.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations

### Rating: Well Developed

**Findings**

School leaders and staff communicate effectively around professional expectations. Students hear and understand a unified set of college-bound expectations that prepare them for college and career.

**Impact**

Faculty and staff create an environment of mutual accountability. Students take ownership of their progress toward meeting personal goals they have set for themselves, attaining mastery of the Common Core Standards and achieving college readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders consistently hold the staff accountable to instructional and professional expectations, beginning with a staff handbook that makes a variety of expectations clear, and also in implementing professional learning and support, often provided by colleagues. A core expectation for teaching and learning that is set out for teachers is to provide students with 25 minutes of independent or group practice time during each period. Additionally teachers and school leaders work collaboratively to define expectations, such as students constructing their own ideas, problem solving and defending the steps that they took, and engaging in peer- or self-assessment. A review of teacher observation records reflects that teachers are held accountable for expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school’s professional learning calendar shows sessions on instructional and assessment routines, led by teacher leaders. School leaders follow up with emails every week to share, “instructional highlights” that they have observed during the week, such as the use of pre-assessments, students setting academic and personal goals, teacher and student language that emphasizes a growth mindset, and teachers using timers and other supports to create clear expectations for work time in the classroom. These emails provide ongoing clarity to teachers about expectations and provide teachers with guidance about which colleagues they can go to for help implementing specific strategies.

- Department and grade leaders provide ongoing guidance, and hold advisors and teachers accountable for supporting the academic and social emotional growth of students. In grade level teams, teachers use the school’s online grading portal to look at grades and anecdotal feedback on student performance to provide students with focused guidance and supports, whether in advisory, or in the academic subject areas. This information is also shared with students, and students present their academic progress, current supports, and future supports needed to parents and school staff in student led conferences, where students demonstrate ownership of their learning several times a year. As a student shared, “Starting about a month before, we use goal setting sheets to analyze our grades, decide how we can do better, create goals for ourselves and explain our vision to our parents.”

- Students are introduced to the school’s 97 percent college acceptance rate in sixth and ninth grade summer bridge programs, and receive ongoing supports through advisory to guide students toward college entry. As a student shared, “You know what to expect in twelfth grade from the start, so it’s never stressful.” Advisory groups center on students owning the belief that they will become confident, compassionate, open-minded, present, prompt, prepared, perseverant, respectful and responsible (C²OP⁴R), and students spoke about this in student meetings. In ninth grade, when students have College Discovery Day, they learn about the application process and get assigned a college mentor. Advisory has a college focus, at least weekly, and students have one-on-one meetings with mentors about college exams and applications.