Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 004 Duke Ellington

Elementary 06M004

500 West 160 Street
Manhattan
NY 10032

Principal: Adam Stevens

Dates of Review:
March 20, 2018 and March 22, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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>Developing</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The principal communicates high expectations to staff members on a weekly basis with the school newsletter and the staff handbook and follows up with professional development for those expectations. Leaders communicate expectations for college and career readiness for families while guidance counselors work with parents to support these expectations.

Impact

There is a system of accountability for articulated expectations. Staff works with parents to help them understand their child’s progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal publishes a weekly newsletter to communicate high expectations to staff. In a December newsletter, the principal highlighted the expectation that teachers must use multiple strategies to check for understanding. This was supported by professional development on December eleven entitled How to Engage Students. The professional development was designed to support assessment as defined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The newsletter also stated that teachers should be using data to drive instruction. This expectation was supported by a running records analysis conducted by the assistant principals and the coaches. Teachers have stated that expectations are communicated and supported by training and professional development thus allowing them to improve their pedagogy. Communicated expectations and support are followed up by frequent cycles of classroom observations to determine implementation, as well as non-evaluative and evaluative visits from the principal and coaches.

- The staff handbook is used to articulate high expectations to staff members. The handbook has a section entitled non-negotiables. These include, “Assessments must be reflected in grade books”; “Teachers should use explicit feedback based upon rubrics and standards that will include one strength and one actionable next step.” The last page of the handbook is reserved for teachers to sign, stating that they have received the handbook and have received training during the beginning of the year orientation on contents of the entire handbook. Teachers have also stated that the training is ongoing based on the needs of the staff and the training continues during grade team meetings.

- To support parent communication as it pertains to college and career readiness, the SAPIS worker and parent coordinator works with parents by offering financial aid workshops and how to save for college. Parents have stated that these workshops have been beneficial in getting their children in a frame of mind for college. One parent stated, “I specifically chose this school because they support college initiatives at an early age. The principal also has a program entitled “coffee with the principal.” This monthly meeting is designed to discuss issues that parents have. At one particular meeting, a parent stated that she was able to discuss including more career-based instruction into the curriculum. The parent stated, “I thought the meeting was productive. The communication with the principal has been receptive.” Teachers also use Skedula/PupilPath, an online platform that informs parents of their child’s progress. The site is updated throughout the marking period to provide ongoing feedback. Teachers also use the parent engagement on alternating Tuesdays to communicate with parents to discuss student progress.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Classroom strategies inconsistently demonstrate multiple entry points and scaffolds for all students.

Impact

Teachers and school leaders have stated that students learn best by small-group work and student-centered teaching; however, this was not evident in all classes visited. Evidence of higher-order thinking skills were observed for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), although it was not consistent in all classes visited.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of a grade-five math class, the teacher asked the class, “What is an improper fraction?” A student responded, “The numerator is greater than the denominator.” The next step was for the students to solve a problem on the board. Students had to decide how many cups of sugar were required to make two and three quarter batches of cookies if the recipe calls for one half cup of sugar. Student participation was minimal. Although students were in small groups, the lesson was very teacher-centered. The teacher continued to assist students throughout the lesson with minimal independent practice.

- Multiple entry points were evident in some classes; however, in most classes, student assignments were not differentiated. In a grade-four social studies class, students were in small groups discussing migration. ELLs were observed speaking in Spanish discussing how melting glaciers caused the sea levels to rise and resulted in people relocating. Another group was working on the same topic in English. A group of students that had Individualized Education Programs (IEP) was working on an assessment on the computer that was not related to the objective. Although the lesson was designed to support language and assessment needs of students, it was not designed to reflect multiple entry points based on cognitive abilities of the students. In another class observed, kindergarten students were discussing stories that they wrote. The topic was what makes them happy. The teacher used scaffolds for some students by allowing them to use a feelings chart to describe how they felt. One student stated, “I feel happy when my mother takes me to the park.” The student used the feelings chart to point to the happy face. Other students did not require the scaffold.

- During the observation of a grade-five math class, students were working on fractions at different stations in color-coded groups. The red team was using fraction strips to help divide fractions by whole numbers. The yellow team used fraction strips for more difficult problems. The green team worked on a problem without the fraction strips. The green group was observed working on one quarter divided by one eighth. When asked how the multiple entry points were organized to support the needs of the different students, the teacher stated that students were placed in groups based on previous exit tickets. Although multiple entry points were evident in this class, this was not observed in most classes visited.
Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact
Unit and lesson plans use Common Core Learning Standards to promote college readiness and purposeful decisions to incorporate the literacy standards across grades and subjects build coherence. Higher-order questions are used in lesson plans to support all learners, including ELLs and bilingual students.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans demonstrate the use of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to expose students to skills that support college readiness. An example is seen in a science unit on how living things interact. The unit incorporates literature standards that include determining the main idea of a text, recounting the key details and explaining how they support the main idea. Teachers stated that incorporating literacy in other content areas helps prepare students for higher levels of learning. The unit also demonstrates the instructional shift regarding text-based answers by having students do the following, “Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas, concept or steps in technical procedures in a text.” Literacy standards and instructional shifts were evident in most units reviewed.

- ELLs are exposed to higher-order thinking questions to support a rigorous curriculum. In a grade-three bilingual lesson plan, students are required to answer higher-order thinking questions that are tied to Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level questions. These include, “What key words in a problem indicate that you must subtract to solve it?” And “How do you record the steps when subtracting two and three digit numbers?” Teachers have stated that as a result of bilingual students being exposed to higher-order thinking skills, bilingual students are beginning to show more confidence in expressing themselves in English.

- Emphasis on higher-order thinking is demonstrated in lesson plans in various subjects and grades. In a grade-one science lesson, students are required to recall facts about seasons and from previous lessons and write five sentences explaining their thinking and citing text to support their writing. An additional example is evident in a grade-five math lesson. Students are required to work independently to solve multi-step word problems and explain their process and thinking to their peers. The lesson also requires that students write a reflection summarizing their thought process and share with the class. Teachers have stated that they have witnessed productive struggle by their students based on their questions and time spent on task.
Findings

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

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback on student work using a glow-and-grow format that helps students understand their progress. Common assessments such as benchmark assessments are used to determine if students are meeting their goals and to adjust curricula and pacing calendars accordingly.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use beginning-of-the-year assessments across grades to determine progress and also assure that student performance is aligned with the school goals which include decreasing Level one performance in math. After analyzing these assessments, it was evident that students in the testing grades were struggling with fractions. As a result, pacing calendars were adjusted to include more lessons on fractions earlier in the year to provide more time for exposure and further assessments. Teachers also discovered that students across grades were struggling with short-response questions. This was based on looking at prior State exams, beginning-of-the-year and middle-of-the-year assessments. As a result, literacy has been implemented across all contents to provide students with more exposure to writing. This was evident in lesson and unit plans reviewed. Consultants were also hired to provide additional supports to the teachers.

- Rubrics are used to provide feedback to students to ensure that they are aware of their learning steps and progress. A sample writing rubric from a grade-one class was reviewed. It covered areas including, did the picture tell a story, topic generation, letter attempts, and letter sounds. The student work was rated from a blank face which represented below expectations, to two eyes, a smiley face and a face with a huge smile which represented mastery. The student received a two-eyed face in the area of, the picture tells a story and able to generate a topic. Feedback to the student included, “Your picture really expresses how you feel. You are working very hard to form your letters correctly. Next time make sure you put spaces between your words so the reader can read it.” An additional example was evident on a grade-three math rubric. The student was being rated from one to three. The student received a three for “Evidence of understanding task is shown, numerator and denominator are accurate, and work is correct.” Feedback to the student included, “Evidence of the task is correct. Be careful when shading, be sure you are accurate with the number to be shaded.” Rubrics used to provide actionable feedback were evident in most classes visited.

- Teachers use a glow-and-grow format on student work samples. An example was seen on posted work in a grade-five class. The student wrote an essay on nutrition facts of foods. The glow stated, “You worked harder on constructing sentences and background knowledge of health.” The grow for the student was, “Let’s work on completing our letter structure.” In an additional example, the teacher provided a glow stating, “I see that you worked harder on organization and paragraphs.” The glow stated, “You have made some errors in spelling, capitalization and transition words.” During a student interview, a student stated, “We receive glows and grows in most of our classes. The comments let us know how we are doing and now I know what my teacher expects of me and I make corrections.”
**Additional Finding**

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with frequent cycles of observations. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

**Impact**

The principal and instructional coaches support new teachers with informal observations and follow ups. Teachers receive feedback from administrators and coaches through observations that reflect clear expectations for teacher practice and development.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Observation reports of a new teacher demonstrated support for pedagogical development with follow-up observations. Developmental support included, providing feedback such as, “Continue to use the explicit model of teaching, use a timer to make sure that students are given sufficient time to practice what you model.” This was based on the observation that the teacher was developing in designing coherent instruction. The principal noted, “The lesson has a recognizable structure, but the progression of activities is uneven with only some reasonable time allocations.” The principal conducted two follow-up observations. The second observation stated that the teacher was still developing in designing coherent instruction. The principal stated, “Time allotment has improved; however, there was little evidence of differentiated instruction.” The teacher received an effective rating in the same area. The principal stated, “The learning activities have reasonable time allocations; they represent significant cognitive challenges with some differentiation for different groups of students.” During a teacher interview, a teacher noted that feedback to new teachers is supportive with frequent classroom visits and discussions.

- Administrators and instructional coaches support teachers with feedback from informal observations. An example was seen in the review of a coach’s log. The coach listed the areas of strength, areas to be strengthened and next steps for a teacher. In this particular example, the coach noted that the teacher’s strengths were, assessing students in a timely manner, maintaining a friendly learning environment and using checks for understanding. The areas for improvement included classroom management and student engagement. Supports included creating engagement methods for students that include random questioning, and reviewing resources such as books, lesson plan template, charts and the use of lesson closure that is student-led to further support engagement.

- The principal uses Advance observation reports to conduct formal observations of teachers and provide support and articulate instructional expectations. An example was evident in an observation report of a teacher from last October. The teacher was rated developing under the area of using assessment in instruction. The principal stated, “Students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria; the teacher monitors student learning for the class as a whole.” The principal stated that instructional expectations include all teachers must incorporate checks for understanding as a form of assessment. To support this expectation, feedback included, “Consider using a checklist to track student responses. There must be a strong connection between teacher monitoring of students’ learning progress.” This level of feedback was evident in all observations reviewed.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity.

Impact
Grade-level team collaborations result in improved teacher practices. Teachers take on leadership roles such as chairing various committees and facilitating programs which result in key decisions being made that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- To support distributive leadership initiatives within the school setting, a teacher launched the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to provide a matrix for behavioral management throughout the entire school. The teacher serves as the PBIS chairperson and is responsible for conducting meetings and ensuring that all staff are trained in the matrix that outlines behavioral expectations. The impact of this initiative is evident in the decrease in student suspensions from twenty-eight last year to eight this year over the same time period. An additional example of how distributive leadership is supported was evident by the work of peer-collaborative teachers. These teachers are responsible for providing supports for their peers in areas of ELA and math. They have an impact on the teacher teamwork as they provide feedback to other teachers on instructional practices and arrange visitation dates for teachers to visit their classrooms. A peer collaborator created a gallery walk to calibrate bulletin boards throughout the building. The peer-collaborative teacher also facilitates and designs the after-school program and the Saturday academy.

- Grade-level teams look at assessment data. A grade-five team looked at student performance in math. The team recorded the minutes of the meeting. They reviewed student work from two teacher’s classes. Noticings included students struggling with multiplication of fractions and conversions. Teachers discussed reteaching the skill using the Box, Underline, Circle, Knock out, Strategy (BUCKS). The team agreed to use a graphic organizer for the lower-performing students. An additional example was seen in grade-one planning session minutes. Teachers recorded that they looked at student data which included, beginning of the year and middle of the year and portfolio pieces. They stated that data showed students struggle with writing and expressing ideas. They decided that they want to prepare students for the next grade by looking at a balance of skills and test-taking strategies. All grade-team minutes demonstrated a protocol for looking at student work and suggesting practices to improve instruction. One teacher stated that her students made progress by implementing the BUCKS strategy.

- To further support distributive leadership, teachers, coaches and a business manager sit on the extended administrative cabinet. Their role is to have a voice in areas of curriculum and instruction, budget and community partnerships. The meeting is attended by grade leaders, interns and coaches. The team serves as advisors to the administrators in areas such as curriculum adjustments. One example of teachers having a voice is creating a Writing Across the Content Areas curriculum as a result of a meeting with administration to discuss improving English Language Arts. Teachers have stated these meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to help shape the instructional vision of the school and build leadership.