Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 018 Park Terrace
K-8 06M018
4124 9 Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10034

Principal: Connie Mejia

Dates of Review:
January 23, 2018 - January 24, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwiec
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

P.S. 018 Park Terrace serves students in grade K through grade 8. 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>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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through the staff handbook, weekly newsletters, theme-based walkthroughs, and model classroom development. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness by successfully partnering with families through the Parent Handbook, Parent Association monthly meetings, and parent workshops.

Impact

School leaders have provided training, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability for meeting the school's expectations. As a result of partnering with families, school leaders and staff support student progress toward meeting expectations for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff handbook is introduced at the beginning of the school year to all staff and describes expectations for routines, compliance, and instructional procedures and practices. Updated information and reminders are shared weekly in newsletters written by the principal. As an example, one newsletter reminds teachers of the expectation to arrive on time to the cafeteria or lineups so that students learn the importance of punctuality and how it affects the use of time. Further expectations are made for teachers to serve as role models for students in time management, organization, and classroom care, for students emulate what adults do. In another example, the principal reminds teachers that observations will focus on Danielson Framework for Teaching components for questioning and discussion (3b), engaging students in learning (3c), and using assessment in instruction (3d). Further newsletter topics include reviewing the lesson template, reviewing the Danielson components, and conducting an intervisitation with a colleague as a way to “hone your practice.” The impact of these practices is stated in the 2017 school survey, as 96 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the principal/school leader makes clear to the staff expectations for meeting instructional goals.

- Theme-based walkthroughs serve as a method to both clarify expectations and hold teachers accountable for meeting them. In October, the principal and assistant principal visited each classroom and the hallways, looking for current student work displayed with appropriate feedback, curricular maps with instructional shifts that were up to date, word walls, and student portfolios, among other instructional features. Each teacher was given specific feedback with the note indicating when school leaders will return to ensure that improvements are noted and displayed. Some examples included, “update your outside display for October and November…include rubrics, Glows and Grows and keep student pictures” and “The upcoming board should be linked to the (instructional) shifts, include the Common Core learning standards.” The impact of these walkthroughs and teacher observations as stated by teachers is that professional development sessions are designed based on evidence gathered by leaders. Moreover, teachers are invited into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) based on a specific targeted topic, strategy, or method of instruction.

- Parents and students agree that the school has numerous methods of communication that focus on high expectations and college and career readiness and support student progress toward those expectations. They state that they are well-informed and enthusiastic about how effectively the school prepares students by the number of events and college visits, that have all had successful participation by parents and students. These include monthly workshops for families that examine many facets of the college quest as well as monthly Parent Association meetings that have topics of interest, including academic areas such as reading, writing, math, and learning English.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across most classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that align with school’s curricula and are moving toward offering a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments in reading, writing, and math to determine student progress toward goals across grades, but not all data is tracked over time.

Impact

Using assessment data, teachers provide actionable feedback to students, but it is not yet meaningfully connected to growth in student achievement. Common assessment data is used to adjust curricula and instruction; however, not all students, including English Language Learner (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have demonstrated increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have developed several methods of providing feedback to students, including rubrics, added comments, and conference notes taken during reading sessions. Most feedback teachers provide aligns with their curricula and provides actionable next steps, such as using a list of “glows.” Teachers also add next steps to guide students on how to actually accomplish the “grow” advice. For example, a glow for a grade three science informational writing piece focused on an animal stated: “You introduced the topic. Your details are relevant to the topic.” The grow stated, “Check your spelling. Add more examples. Some of your paragraphs are too short.” Next steps were “Explain facts using examples. This will add to your stamina.” In a math example, a glow stated, “Great job demonstrating your fluency in adding and subtracting,” and a grow was, “Please remember to pay close attention to the questions when solving a problem.” The next steps stated, “Communicate how you solved the problem.” Though actionable, this feedback does not necessarily lead to meaningful and internalized improvements in student work.

- As reported by individual students, not all next steps are clear or procedural enough for them to know what can actually be accomplished. For example, in a writing class, feedback to students stated, “Next time, add more scenes to your letter.” This format contained next steps that were not actionable and could not lead to meaningful improvement in future writing projects. In another example, the next steps stated, “Revise versus Edit, Guided Writing.” In a math class, the feedback concluded with, “Revise your notes and see how it was done in class.”

- Common assessments include Fountas and Pinnell for reading for kindergarten through grade eight and pre- and post-writing in grades three through eight; math pre- and post-tests in grades three through eight, SchoolNet for math and in grades four and eight, and science performance tasks. These are used to determine student progress toward goals across the grades and subjects. The school leaders keep assessment data in separate databases and begin each year with baseline information, primarily in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Although monitored, longitudinal data that would create a clear picture of each student’s mastery over time is not readily available.

- According to school leaders and teachers, they use the data from a range of assessments to plan and differentiate instruction based on student needs, to revise curriculum maps and lesson plans to improve student achievement, to look for patterns and trends for systematic change, and to modify pedagogy. For instance, adjustments were made based on 2017 State assessments in ELA and math. However, evidence of impact on the ELL population is limited, as subgroup analysis from 2016 to 2017 State ELA and math assessments showed little growth. There was no other data analysis available that presented ELL achievement as an aggregate over time.
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 integrate the instructional shifts, including using texts with a range of complexity, identifying evidence in text-based analysis, and using math models to solve problems. School staff use student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Coherent curricula promote college and career readiness. Curricula are accessible to all students and ensure their cognitive engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans aligned to grade level Common Core standards embed the instructional shifts of building on a range of text complexity and guide students to analyze text for details in order to access the main idea. In a grade three lesson plan for bilingual students, the metaphor of a tree with roots, a trunk, branches, and leaves is used to introduce the concept of main idea with supporting details. Referring to a previous text, “Roots,” the next day’s sequence begins with the teacher modeling through a series of questions, “What is the main idea? How can readers determine the main idea of a text? What details are included to support the main idea? Why do authors include key ideas as part of the text?” The class works in partner groups and reads through a series of sentences taken from the text, analyzing whether they are details supporting the main idea or not. Through this process, students are exposed to deciphering big ideas from supporting details in a step-by-step manner that helps to break down complex text into understandable skills that support college and career readiness.

- In other lesson plans, instructional shifts are integral to the development of content. A grade six literacy lesson plan focuses on using textual evidence to not only support analysis of what a text says explicitly but also to build understanding of inferences. Using the theme of “What can one person do to make a difference?” the teacher distributes related articles about an adolescent inventor who created a braille typewriter using Legos. These leveled articles are read and discussed in small groups with guiding questions, such as “What did you find inspiring about this story?” In another example, a grade five math lesson using multiple resources, students are guided in using manipulatives to learn by modeling and writing a note of explanation to the teacher to answer the question “How can you use a model to divide by a decimal?” Afterwards, students write in their math journals a word problem that involves dividing by a decimal, including a picture of the solution using a model.

- School Leadership and teachers described how teacher teams began to modify curriculum using student work and data so that a diversity of learners will have access to the curricula and be engaged. The staff concluded that a literacy program assessment they had been using were not rigorous enough based on student work products and data. As a result, they modified these assessments by adding writing tasks, realigned the sequence of the units and when content was taught, and had teachers write their own assessments. In math, they looked at student data and redesigned the curriculum to add more math fluency.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, focusing on evidence-based argument, working in collaborative groups, and being engaged in discussions. Student engagement includes conversations that strengthen language and allow students to take the lead.

#### Impact

Students produce meaningful work products in all subject areas that, along with discussions, reflect high levels of student thinking and participation with increased levels of independence.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The reading workshop model as demonstrated included increasing levels of independence and student discussion, encouraging risk-taking and sharing ideas. Components of this model included an introduction, guided practice, and independent work. The content objective in an observed English Language Arts grade seven class was “To read ‘Dikembe Mutombo: Walking Tall On and Off the Court.’” During the “Intro to Practice” section of the lesson, the teacher shared the procedure for this rereading of an article the class had read the day before. They were to reread with the focus of answering specific questions tailored for each group. The next phase of the lesson was designed with differentiated questions to discuss within each group. A practice observed across all classrooms was a mid-point teaching check that occurred halfway through the independent work time. The teacher signaled the class to stop their work and discuss with their table group or partner the information that they had gathered and whether anyone needed more support.

- Most classes demonstrated a workshop structure of instruction that aligned to the school leadership beliefs about how students learn best. In an observed grade five double-period math class, both the learning objective and the essential question dealt with using math modeling to divide by decimals. Students sat in small cooperative groups at tables and had conversations about how they would solve the problems. They explored options by modeling problems with base-ten blocks. During the exploration time, students began to draw conclusions using their Think, Write, Share protocol. They then made connections using decimal models to divide by hundredths. A mid-point check asked the students to explain how to use decimals to find 3 divided by 0.75. The teacher stopped and had students share their thinking by table groups. This was soon followed with math rotation groups for 30 minutes that entailed three different ways to work to further build on understanding. The math periods finished with a formative assessment in problem-solving and the writing of a math journal entry.

- Since most classrooms use accountable talk discussion prompts with students that guide asking and responding to a range of questions, discussions reflected high levels of discourse. Students responded by beginning a statement with “In my opinion…” or “A very important is…” or “I agree with you because…” or “I think this belongs with the main idea because…. Another structure that helps to facilitate student discussion as well as fostering student responsibility for tasks is the assignment of roles for small group discussions. These roles include captain, facilitator, recorder, time keeper, and reporter. Students stated that these roles help keep them focused, productive, and accountable during their discussions.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observations, walkthroughs, and teacher reflections. Feedback to teachers using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* accurately captures strengths, challenges and next steps.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- School Leaders launched the new school year in September with announced visits and with a planned monthly walkthrough starting in October, with feedback to each teacher. This was enacted so leaders could calibrate expectations for teachers and clarify how they would follow through to ensure teachers are meeting them. One comment from leaders was, “Wow! They (students) are writing in math. The rubric is at the bottom of their work. It included Glows and Grows. Perhaps you can build upon this by including a self-reflection on the flip side of the paper...” Another example of feedback was, “Outside (bulletin board) work needs to be in students’ portfolios and inside (your classroom), Oct/Nov work in the hall with Glows/ Grows and rubrics.” All feedback had a reminder that School Leadership would be doing another walkthrough on October 31st to see that all next steps have been enacted. Formal observations conclude in April, with end of year reflections completed in June.

- Support for teachers and staff is based on an analysis of student and teacher data and work products. Professional goals and learning experiences are structured around the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. After the initial informal observation of each teacher in the fall, each teacher met with school leaders to draft an Individualized Professional Development Plan. Each teacher completes this, including responses to these elements: What do you feel you need at this point to develop as an educator?; Areas of Strength; Areas you need to develop; and Supporting Effective Practice and Teaching Framework, referring to the four domains of Danielson. The Professional Development Team then responds with recommendations that can direct the teacher to specific Professional Learning Committees offered or opportunities to serve as a teacher leader.

- School Leaders provide feedback to teachers that accurately capture strengths, challenges, and next steps using Danielson. In one example, a school leader wrote to a teacher in September regarding “Using Assessment in Instruction” (3d), with feedback that stated, “Use your Midpoint check to see if they (students) are still with you.” The follow-up observation later raised the teacher’s rating in 3d to Highly Effective with this comment: “The teacher used Midpoint Check questions posted on the board as students responded by going up and writing responses on the chart.” School leaders also follow-up on any visit to the classroom with a written memo form called “Immediate Feedback,” as it relates to supporting the school’s core beliefs about how students learn best. These include using evidence in arguments, student engagement, and collaborative group work. Teachers report that all feedback from administrators and coaches is welcomed, as they provide clear expectations for next steps and timely follow-up.
### Additional Finding

#### 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

**Quality Indicator:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

The majority of teachers participate in professional collaborative inquiry teams. Teachers consistently analyze assessment data in various forms and student work using rubrics during collaborative grade level team and inquiry team meetings.

**Impact**

Through team collaboration, teachers’ instructional capacity and pedagogy as well as progress toward goals for groups of students have improved, as evidenced through improvement in pre- and post-writing assessments and teacher reflections on school goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher inquiry teams meet weekly and collaborate for a four-week long focus targeted on improving student performance by analyzing teacher practice. The stages of their inquiry teams include Phase I, Launch (Research): Phase II, Professional Collaboration (to collate information and data results and identify trends); Phase III, Analysis (of findings and justify data researched); and Phase IV, Presentation (share best practices and strategies for implementation). As observed, the grades three and four inquiry team discussed the mid-year writing assessment results in depth, as they reflected on the needs of their students. They selected specific students in each classroom, targeting strategies for each with a follow-up plan, and selected meeting dates when the results of the interventions would be shared, with discussions of progress made and next steps. Minutes from other inquiry teams list these same stages and resulting adjustments to instruction. The kindergarten through grade two team made adjustments to their performance tasks by substituting an opinion writing piece for a narrative. This made the task “more appropriate for the beginning of the year,” as students could draw from their own experiences.

- Teachers choose their areas of collaboration, as all inquiry teams are vertical teams and based on school goals. Each cycle has four different problems of practice to investigate. The topics for the first two Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) were using data to develop groups for direct instruction in math, as evidenced by mid-point checks for understanding, and teacher and student generated higher order thinking questions for engagement and debate, as shown in Socratic Circles. Other areas of exploration included student informational writing and lesson planning supporting student engagement in learning through STEM content. The school goal relevant to PLCs states: “By June 2018, PLCs in grades Kindergarten through eight will engage in a minimum of four PLC cycles focused on specific topics aligned to Advance results and teacher end of year conferences with School Leadership.” By mid-year, all teachers had participated in two cycles, as reported by school leaders and teachers. Administrators report that teachers have held themselves accountable, focusing on specific topics that transfer to team instructional practices. Teachers report that vertical teams support peer learning from by trying out new approaches with others.

- The observed grade three and four inquiry team focused on the use of text-based evidence in student writing. One teacher stated after examining the student samples, “In my opinion, use of text-based evidence, grammar, and organization has improved. Understanding and comprehension has increased.” Another teacher observed that the samples were more coherent with information that was relevant and improved. They analyzed them, noted some differences, and explored how to prepare their students for the transition from the grade three to grade four rubric. The inquiry team meeting ended with teachers selecting one student sample in order to get feedback from the other members of the team. They shared strategies for improvement, discussing the use of graphic organizers, checklists to help student stay focused, and instruction that emphasized going back to the reading to get relevant details.