Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 77 Lower Lab School
Elementary 02M077
1700 3 Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10128

Principal: Sandra Miller

Dates of Review:
January 31, 2018 - February 1, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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. 77 Lower Lab School serves students in grade K through grade 5. 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Well Developed</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>
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</tbody>
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## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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<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>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, that is related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provide training. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
Teachers and school leaders share a culture of mutual accountability for high expectations that include planning for professional development (PD) topics. Successful partnerships with families include parents having a voice in academics across all grades and collaborations with the principal to support student progress toward high standards.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to the entire staff by collaborating with staff members to support mutual expectations. The principal communicated to the entire staff the expectation of rigor in the classrooms. The yearlong professional development plan is divided into seven four-week cycles. The principal works with different teacher teams to support expectations that are tied to rigor in instruction. The cycle two professional development was facilitated by the school leadership and teachers on the subject of rigor, and was followed up by a PD session entitled “The Magical Combination of Independence and Rigor,” facilitated by a classroom teacher. When asked about how the PD came about, a teacher stated, “Rigor is an expectation that we share with the leadership and we make joint decisions on how the professional development cycles will address this area of Danielson [Framework for Teaching].”

- Partnerships with parents regarding college and career readiness are successful. Each class has a parent representative that comprises the Parent Teacher Association. As a team, they are instrumental in getting a Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) program into the school by including it in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) in collaboration with the principal. Additional partnerships with parents and teachers resulted in having an afterschool Mandarin program and a school wellness program. Parents stated that the Mandarin program and STEM would be instrumental in helping prepare students for college and the next level. When asked how these programs came about, one parent stated, “We have regular meetings with the principal and we discuss things that we feel will benefit students.” Another parent stated, “We were able to bring these programs to the school by being involved in the CEP.”

- The principal created “Coffee Talk” as a way to successfully communicate with families on school expectations and get feedback from parents. A kindergarten to grade-two Coffee Talk feedback form was presented. The form asked parents if they enjoyed the forum, what could be done to make it better, and any additional comments. The parent stated they liked that there was an agenda for topics to discuss. The parent further stated, “It [Coffee Talk] helps facilitate an opened discussion for parents.” Another parent stated, “I would like to know more about Continental Math [League] and science Olympiads that students participate in.” This serves as a venue for communication as all parents have a forum with the principal. The success was measured as Coffee Talk allowed parents to push for an after-school program. Every parent spoken to was aware of instructional expectations and had had time with the principal. Because of the high levels of communication, the principal is able to support the interests of parents that ultimately lead to an understanding of students’ academic progress. An example is the creation of a gifted and talented progress report.
Area of Focus

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

Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data for students across grades. Distributive leadership structures are in place to support teacher growth.

Impact
Analysis of assessment data and student work by the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) results in improved teacher practices and student improvement; however, assessment analysis is not systematically conducted across grades and subjects but channeled through the PPT. Teachers have a voice in key decisions, but they do not play an integral role in those decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- The minutes of a January thirty one PPT meeting showed the team working with students based on referrals. A grade-one student showed little progress in benchmark assessments. The student struggled with spelling, reading and decoding, and writing. Schoolwork concerns included struggling with reading and writing and struggling with decoding. Based on assessments and classroom observations, for this student, the team suggested using a letter strip at the desk, using auditory break down of words and putting them back together during small-group and one-on-one assistance. Minutes also included a grade-two student referral; running records showed visual decoding issues and adding and subtracting as very challenging based on classroom observations. Recommendations from the team included using CUBES (circle important numbers, underline the question, box the key words, evaluate and solve.) and using pictures and graphic organizers before writing. Although the PPT team examined data for various students and provided interventions, there was no evidence of systems across grades and subjects to inform other teacher teams of best practices; thereby, limiting the improvement of teacher practice.

- Teachers have responsibilities other than their teaching duties to promote distributive leadership. Lead teachers are responsible for supporting teacher development and have a voice in the decision-making process that effects student learning. This was evident as the literacy coach defined her role which includes making decisions on what the goals and areas of focus will be for the kindergarten to grade-two curriculum such as using Teachers College (TC) Readers and Writers Workshops and collaborating with the TC staff developer, and selecting materials for the reading libraries. Responsibilities also included mentoring new teachers and conducting professional learning committees. Although the lead teachers have a voice in instructional decisions, there was no evidence of how they and other teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school thus, distributive leadership is not embedded across the school.

- To further support distributive leadership practices in the school, a kindergarten teacher expressed an interest in technology. After receiving training and outside professional development, the teacher is now the lead for technology in the lower grades. Her responsibilities include creating a scope and sequence for media and literacy and incorporating technology into the curriculum. The technology lead teacher also purchases applications for the student IPads and trains teachers on how to use them in the classroom. She also plans and leads the weekly teacher meetings. This leadership role has an impact on teacher practice as they are using the pacing calendar that was created by the tech teacher. Technology was incorporated in the classrooms that were visited.
Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula and tasks incorporate the Common Core Learning Standards, strategically integrate the instructional shifts and the use of technology across subjects and grades. These tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Unit and lesson plans support college and career readiness for all students across grades and ensure access to the curricula and tasks and cognitive engagement for all, including high-achieving students.

Supporting Evidence

- Units support high achieving students by providing scaffolds to further their learning. An example was evident in a grade-five Understanding by Design (UBD) unit, on how multiplication and division are related. The unit included extensions for higher functioning students which included creating their own cluster problems, breaking numbers apart and creating multiple towers. An additional example was evident in a grade-five reading English Language Arts unit. The unit included Webb’s Depth on Knowledge (DOK) questions for different groups of students to answer. Higher-functioning students are exposed to DOK level four. The questions included, “How can studying animal defenses benefit humans?” Level one questions for lower-third students include, “Where do Hagfish live”? All units reviewed reflected extensions and differentiation for all students to have access.

- To support college and career readiness for all students, all lesson plans incorporate Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts, and technology to expand on student thinking. An example was seen in a grade-three social studies unit on learning about a far-away country. Common Core-aligned standards included, asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of the text, use of technology to produce and publish writing and “make strategic use of digital media in presentations to enhance understandings of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.” Instructional shifts include writing from the text, as students were required to build on their knowledge of the world by creating presentations of a foreign country and use multimedia to research their topic. All classes strategically incorporated technology into their lesson. The principal stated that the vision was to have technology integrated into studies rather than have it as a separate class.

- Lesson plans are refined using student data. The school reviewed end-of-year math assessments, and based on students performing above level, the decision was made to move all students up by one grade level using the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC) curriculum. For example, grades one and two are working on the curriculum one grade above their own. Other grade interim assessments are being examined to make adjustments as well. An example of how units are modified to ensure engagement for lower-functioning students is evident in the Teachers College curriculum. Teachers in grade three conducted pre- and post-assessments graded by the class teachers. A noticing was that the bulk of the class needed work on hooking the reader and using transitional phrases. Units were extended to spend more time in these areas. An example is evident in a grade-three unit. In order to hook the reader, the unit is extended to include adding turn and talk time for students to respond to questions such as, “What makes this character significant? How does it connect to other parts of the story?”
Findings
Across all classrooms, teaching practices reflect how students learn best by engagement through questioning and discussion tied to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. All classrooms visited reflected high levels of student thinking, participation and ownership.

Impact
Through small-group instruction, all students produce meaningful work products. Students demonstrate ownership by explaining their work. This is informed by discussions at the school level.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classes visited, students used metacognition to support discussion and help express their thinking to take ownership of how they learn. In a kindergarten English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were working in small groups discussing tips on how to improve a writing sample from the teacher. The teacher read a page from “How to Read a Story” during the reading, students were encouraged to give a thumbs up if they heard a piece of advice, a suggestion or a warning in the story. Students gave thumbs up for advice. The teacher gave students the choice of staying on the carpet if they needed additional help or to move into their groups if they understood. Three students decided to stay on the rug. When asked why, one student responded, “I know some of it, but I need to help my friend, so I want more help.” The teacher stated that students make the decision on what they need extra help in and must explain their thinking. This was a practice in all classes visited.

- All classes visited demonstrated high levels of student engagement. In a grade-three social studies class, students were working on researching Brazil. Students were heard engaged in conversations about the demographics of Brazil. One student was saying, “By using the flip-grade search engine, I discovered that Brazil has fifty-three million people.” When asked why this was significant, the student stated, “This is significant because when comparing Brazil to the United States, Brazil is almost six times smaller in how many people live in both places.” Another student stated, “I’m using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast both countries to look at how different factors affect how people live.” An additional example of high levels of student engagement was seen in a grade-four math class on fractions. Students were working on dividing sandwiches. Each group had different equations. For example, one group had to divide seven sandwiches while another group was required to share three sandwiches between five students. Students were observed using charts and graphs to find the answers. Students were observed in progressive struggle as they worked together to solve their individual task in small groups. The teacher stated that the lesson was reflective of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to support student engagement.

- Across all classrooms visited, student learning was supported by how students and teachers stated they learn best by engagement through questioning and discussion aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers have stated that students learn best through analyzing text and supporting claims. Students were observed in a grade-four ELA class reading the story *Number the Stars*. Students were involved in a turn and talk on “What did you notice about Kristi’s response? How is it different from Mrs. Rosen’s and why would they respond so differently to the same event?” One student stated, “Mrs. Rosen has more reason to be concerned because the German soldiers invaded Denmark.” All classes supported student-centered learning and high levels of participation and engagement. Discussions of these practices are evident in teacher meeting minutes and agendas presented.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment such as checklists.

Impact

Teachers use student work to provide glows and grows that serve as actionable feedback to students regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective adjustments to teaching during lessons to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- To provide actionable feedback to students, teachers write glows and grows on student work. This was evident throughout the building. An example was provided in a math class. On a student work sample the glow included, “Great start fixing up your equations to be stacked.” The grow for next steps for the student included, “Maybe next time you put tens together, for example, 9+1=10 or 8+2=10.” Another example included the glow, “Great job of using equations and the number line.” The grow was, “Next time I would love to see your equations to match your actual mental math.” In ELA, the grow included, “Always try to include more than one example from the book and read your conclusion and think about how you could improve it.” Students stated that the feedback they receive helps them to understand their assignments better.

- Students use self-assessments to demonstrate their understanding of the subject material. Grade-one students use a mathematical thinking checklist to demonstrate their understanding. The checklist covers five areas of comprehension. In one example presented, a student checked off that he answered all the questions, he showed his thinking clearly and used a model to show mathematical thinking by using a number line, picture or equation. In addition, the student circled the area that stated he showed his work in more than one way. The circle indicated that this skill was still being worked on. An additional example of student self-assessment was presented in grade-one. Using an opinion-writing checklist, a student checked off that she wrote a beginning that got the readers’ attention, and that the piece had different parts. The student checked off that she was starting to work on writing an ending for the piece and reminding the readers of the student’s opinion. One student stated, “We use self-assessments all the time. They help us to show our teachers what we know.”

- Teachers in most classes visited use checks for understanding to make on-the-spot instructional adjustments based upon students’ needs. An example was seen in a grade-two ELA class. The teacher was reading a passage from a story and stated, “She rose and fled as mighty as a dove.” The teacher asked the students what the statement meant. Only three students understood. The teacher discontinued reading the story and asked students to turn and talk about what they think the statement means. When the students returned to whole-group instruction, one student stated, “A dove is a white bird and when it fled that means it flew away.” The teacher added, “Great job, and remember that this was hard to do which is why the author stated the dove was mighty.” An additional example was seen in a grade-one math class. Students were working on number lines and generating equivalent expressions. Students were working in small groups working with cubes to represent various fractions. As the teacher was walking around the classroom, she observed one group having difficulty writing sentences to identify the groups. The teacher asked the students, “How can you show different equations that represent the total number of cubes,” When the students did not respond, the teacher modeled by arranging the cubes in staircase formation and had them count down.”
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

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

**Impact**

Frequent observations are strategically scheduled to support new teachers. *Advance* observation reports provides feedback that is aligned with the professional goals for teachers.

**Supporting Evidence**

- To support the development of new teachers, school leaders have a strategy that includes every new teacher collaborating with mentors, allowing extra time with coaches and inter-visitations to other classes. This was evident as a new kindergarten teacher who was struggling with classroom management was assigned a mentor first grade teacher. The teacher’s schedule was modified to visit her mentor to observe classroom management techniques. An additional example was evident when an assistant principal coached grade-five math and literacy teachers for planning and how to have a mini-lesson with a clear teaching point. As a result, new teacher *Advance* observation ratings reflected highly effective in areas of creating respect and rapport, managing student behavior, growing, and developing professionally.

- The principal uses *Advance* observations cycles to provide feedback to all teachers. The observation cycle include doing two in a row of the same teacher on the same grade within a month. Grade levels are split between the principal and the assistant principal. The principal stated that one of the school-wide goals for instruction was component 3b and 3d, questioning and assessment. Feedback to teachers includes areas of strength and areas that the teacher needs to grow, and are followed by next suggestions and methods for improvement. An example was seen in an *Advance* observation report. The principal's comments included, “Plan one big high-level, open-ended question that your students can discuss.” The principal also stated that the teacher did well with demonstrating knowledge and pedagogy. All teachers have been observed with clear paths to improvement at least twice. Because of the strategic implementation of observations, the vast majority of the teachers in the school are rated highly effective. Beginnings of the year planning conferences are used to articulate the teacher professional goals that will be focused on.

- Feedback to new teachers includes recommendations for collaborating with other teachers to support consistency of instruction and to promote the goals of the school. In an observation report, the principal observed that the teacher’s feedback to students was not actionable. The principal scheduled the teacher to work with a colleague that was highly effective in this area. An additional example was demonstrated as the principal comments to a teacher included how another teacher can support in improving discussion and response time for students. The principal recommended scheduling an inter-visitation with another teacher to support in this area. Teachers have stated that being aware of the schoolwide goals and being provided with support allows them to improve their pedagogy. The schoolwide goals are also supported by intervisitations from teacher mentors and administrators by conducting instructional walk-throughs.