Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 123 Mahalia Jackson
K-8 05M123
301 West 140 Street
Manhattan
NY 10030

Principal: Melitina Hernandez

Dates of Review:
May 29, 2018 - May 30, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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. 123 Mahalia Jackson serves students in grade PK 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<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>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 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>Area of Celebration</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>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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

The school’s stakeholders collaborate and consistently analyze data for the design of focused, school-level goals and action plans present in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and other planning documents. Goal setting and decision-making, based on school data, is well informed by regular communication that helps determine next steps for ongoing school improvement.

#### Impact

Goals are tracked for progress and thoughtfully adjusted to leverage changes that link to accelerated student learning and social-emotional growth. Data-driven needs assessments results in leveraging changes that lead to enhancements in teaching and learning.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The school’s CEP provides a detailed focus on seven goals the school has developed in response to looking at student data and schoolwide practices. Their goals create a comprehensive vision and serve as a yearlong guide focused on effective teaching and successful student learning. The school set both mid-year and end-of-year SMART goals for domains such as rigorous instruction, supportive environment, collaborative teaching, and strong family and community ties. The school’s goals are transparent and shared via constituents who are informed and regularly kept up-to-date on progress. Goals are monitored regularly via benchmark assessments, re-administering Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) multiple times a year, Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) reports, Advance data, and data conferences with teachers to track individual student and class performance and progress. As a result, the school monitors and tracks performance and progress to be adjusted to meet end-of-year targets.

- Based on a review of the prior year’s data, revisions to practice and programs for school year 2017-2018 include the formalization of a teacher-team agenda template as well as introducing a data dive protocol and an improved curriculum mapping tool. The role of the Instructional Cabinet Team was enhanced this year with the grade representatives meeting weekly to set policy and act as a liaison between administration and grade level teams. The school’s monitoring of its instructional intervention program has led to increased reading levels for 67 percent of targeted students, according to Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) data and all students identified for Reading Rescue have shown growth in their skill development, with a minimum increase of four to seven levels on F&P this year. The school works closely with community-based partner Graham Windham, further enhancing their collective work and providing the school with multiple resources. The school reviews student data using the New Visions data sorter, which enables school and Graham Windham staff to prioritize and target students for Success Mentoring.

- During a partnership think tank meeting reflecting on the recent Community School Forum 2018, the school reviewed parent engagement, attendance, academics and enrichment, wellness and mental health, community partnerships, and school environment. This was a culminating meeting of the think tank as they reviewed current approaches to goals and came up with next steps to further focus their attempts to meet their goals. The team reviewed feedback from parents and brainstormed ideas to increase parental involvement. Attendance supports related to the schoolwide goal of improving overall attendance were reviewed, along with Graham Windham gift cards to engage students and families. An outcome of the review of academics and enrichment was the homework help time. The principal also reported a 100 percent parent response rate on the NYC School Survey for this school year. The think tank was evidence of goal-setting and effective action planning at the school level that includes ongoing data gathering and analysis.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best by the workshop model through gradual release of learning from teacher to students that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Students show their thinking through discussions.

Impact

There are missed opportunities to increase engagement and independence in some classrooms. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classrooms, there was evidence of teaching practices that reflected the articulated belief that students learn best when engaged in the workshop model. During an eighth-grade humanities integrated co-teaching (ICT) lesson on The Omnivore’s Dilemma, students were setup in pre-arranged groupings with chart paper that had a section of the text that they were to “find the gist of.” Some groups wrote the gist or their general takeaways. However, some of the groups were writing specific quotes from the text without specific takeaways. During a fourth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students sat in groups reading The Hope Chest. Each group had an assigned question and were asked to find textual evidence and to annotate and underline parts of the text. Students were able to articulate what they were doing and talk about what they were being asked to do next. During a first-grade literacy block lesson, while the teacher worked with one group of four students during guided reading, two other students were sitting next to each other, but were working independently with differing levels of success.

- During a second-grade ICT ELA lesson on positive and negative descriptive language and character traits, students were in four groups, and the teacher called on students to answer questions and asked them to defend their answers. A fifth-grade math line plots lesson included a few turn and talks for students to discuss their thinking. During a sixth-grade math lesson about finding the area of triangles using height and base, students had turn and talk opportunities and a couple of students came up to the board to work out the problem. The teacher led a discussion with students that targeted misconceptions and asked students to explain the why behind their thinking. During a seventh-grade math lesson on box plots, the lesson included discussion of how to find median and the students had scaffolds available for them. There was a connection to real world application in discussion between price and value. The teacher asked a lot of questions, though there were some students who were called on multiple times leading to uneven engagement of students in discussions.

- During a third grade Teachers College Reading and Writing Program lesson, students were reading their partner’s fairy tale adaptation papers to look for descriptive words to change, such as good to great and nice to fantastic. Students discussed with partners descriptive words they noticed while using a scaffold sheet of descriptive words and were able to talk about literal and figurative language. A fifth-grade ELA lesson about comparing timelines of African American History and baseball history connected to Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball, had a learning target of “I can paraphrase key details from a text about the history of baseball and African American history.” Students paraphrased their details from their sheets as they discussed with partners. However, students were focused on changing the highlighted words on their sheets and the lesson lacked more specific info about comparing and aligning historical timelines. As a result, engagement in active discussions and conversation was inconsistent across classrooms.
### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

### Impact

Coherent curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. A diversity of learners has access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core State Standards and New York State content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. For reading and writing, the school uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program in the lower grades and Expeditionary Learning in grades five through eight. For mathematics GO Math! and EngageNY for kindergarten through grades five, Connected Mathematics Project (CMP3) Math and EngageNY for grades six through eight. The school also builds curricular coherence in science, social studies, art, and music with the New York State Standards.

- The math instructional shift requiring that students apply math concepts in real world situations is evident in curricular documents. In a fifth-grade math lesson plan, students are asked to use line plots with fractions in connection to following a recipe of dry ingredients to make muffins. In a seventh-grade math lesson, students analyze two sets of data and make a decision based on the box plots of comparing costs of condos. The ELA instructional shift requiring that students develop their skill in writing from sources emphasizing the use of evidence is apparent in curricular documents. In an eighth grade ELA lesson plan, students use textual evidence to participate in discussions about the text with a partner, small group, and the whole class. In a fourth-grade ELA lesson plan, students are asked to explain the events of chapter four and five in The Hope Chest using details from the text. In a first-grade reading lesson plan, students retell a story they have read by using a post-it to mark some important parts so they can remember what happened. In a fifth-grade ELA grade lesson plan, students paraphrase key details from a text about the history of baseball and African American history.

- A diversity of learners benefit from access to academic tasks as evidenced in a fourth grade ELA lesson plan in which students receive multistep directions to be broken down and numbered for clarity. In a sixth-grade math lesson plan, ELLs have vocabulary words to reference on the board as well as the guided practice example to reference, the lowest third is asked to round to the nearest whole number for measurements, and the high achievers move on to additional exercises. In an eighth grade ELA lesson plan, students work in heterogeneous groups, teachers work with groups to guide any thinking, and sections are broken apart to guide struggling learners. In a fifth-grade math lesson plan, students receive differentiated supports through a tiered independent practice activity approach based on their work on two problems in the textbook. Tier one is an enrichment activity based on investigating the average. Tier two is an activity based on the amount of milk in cereal. Tier three is a reteach activity designed to develop understanding line plots using fractions. Across grades and content areas, rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills are made accessible for all learners.
### Additional Finding

#### Quality Indicator:

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<tr>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school’s curricula to inform feedback to students. School leaders use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

**Impact**

Students receive actionable feedback regarding their achievement. Data from common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. Some examples of that feedback were, “Next steps: We will work on your organization and voice (craft),” and “Redo body paragraph #2, with stronger evidence that relates to your claim.” A fifth-grade student spoke about the feedback she had received from her teacher on an ELA assignment and how she used articles to get information to support her thesis. She added “She told me to use vocabulary words, my words were not strong enough, and I used her feedback to improve my writing.” Another student said regarding teacher feedback, “Every month we get a goal sheet, with goals for each subject, and also how much we grew.”

- Rubrics and checklists are used across grades and content areas as tools of support for student growth. Teachers and students use rubrics as assessment tools and feedback mechanisms. Additionally, rubrics were used as assessment and feedback tools attached to work, as well as displayed on bulletin boards in hallways and in classrooms. Examples of rubrics and checklists range from those designed for specific assignments in narrative writing, writing an argument, writing an essay, traits of writing, and evaluating writing. Evidence of students’ use of these tools is posted on classroom walls, on hallway bulletin boards, and included with student work in portfolios.

- Common assessments in Fountas and Pinnell, Teachers College Reading and Writing Program, math benchmarks, and performance tasks are used to determine student progress and considerations for schoolwide support. This information is used to determine groups and identify specific needs students may have that may be supported in smaller groups. New York City (NYC) Performance Based Tasks are also administered schoolwide at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to track student progress in math and literacy. Computer-based programs iReady and MyOn, are also used for regular assessment. Unit assessments in math and reading are also formative tools that grade teams and individual teachers use to consider what needs to be revisited and retaught. For example, in order to increase student discussion to build literacy, teachers added discussion stems, group protocols, and exit slips to a second-grade book clubs unit.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

**Impact**

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers’ understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Teachers offer detailed feedback that prepares students for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. Teachers also receive a staff handbook that covers topics such as teacher responsibilities, communicating with parents, parent-teacher conferences, bulletin boards, classroom libraries, grading policy, curriculum planning, homework policy, establishing routines and procedures, instructional strategies, and lesson planning. Weekly staff notes informs staff of what is happening and expected next steps. Within the professional learning plan are sessions to support the Danielson Framework for Teaching including, curriculum maps and/or unit of work, looking at student work for both ELA and math, writing and using tiered questioning and strategies for effective discussions, as well as planning and implementing classroom learning centers.

- Three times a year, the principal and supervising assistant principal conduct data conferences with teachers to review student progress and inform goal setting. Prior to the data conferences, teachers are expected to analyze student data, show planning for strategic grouping of students, and complete action plans for all interventions with suitable differentiation to address areas of difficulty. In addition, school leaders expect teachers to maintain a data binder to use data to drive instruction. Training is provided to teachers in effective ways to record and use data to inform instruction. Data is to be kept up to date and in a user-friendly form to support effective planning, preparation, and delivery of instruction. Teachers are also required to maintain individual student portfolios that include student assessment results, and work that represents cumulative projects, showing progress in performance-based tasks. The student portfolios are utilized throughout the year to show student performance and progress and are monitored throughout the year to ensure they are kept up to date with appropriate authentic student work. Student portfolio check-ins are scheduled by school leaders four times a year. Teachers reported that the results of these high expectations are evident in team meetings, looking at the student work, evaluating as a grade and as a school to see where students are in order to change those lessons.

- The school’s culture for learning consistently communicates high expectations that help prepare students for their next level of education. Students receive progress reports and report cards. Teachers use Skedula to post grades online for students and families. Students maintain a Plan Do Check Adjust (PDCA), which includes student goal setting for reading, writing, math, and science. Student portfolios allows students to track Fountas and Pinnell levels, iReady online levels for ELA and math, Teachers College Writing rubric scores through units, math benchmarks, math performance tasks, attendance, and student supports. During the student meeting, multiple students spoke about using PupilPath, their gateway to Skedula. They also reported that they use iReady and MyOn as additional online forms of information to help them improve their reading and math grades. Students also spoke about parent-teacher conferences being an opportunity to help them to be prepared for their learning goals.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

**Impact**

Teachers’ collaborations strengthen their instructional capacity. Teacher team work typically results in progress toward goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- An observed second-grade team met to reflect on a fairy tale writing unit. Roles were defined for teachers with a facilitator, note taker, and timekeeper. The team reviewed examples of student work products, one sample from an enrich group, one from a grade level group, and a third from a reteach group. The inquiry team looked for trends and misconceptions. Outcomes for the enrich sample group included noticing such as needs to work on organization and structure, and to use a sequencing graphic organizer like a flow map. Grade-level noticing were that the use of dialogue and correct punctuation marks and voice is coming through in their writing; however, students are forgetting to edit as they go, and they need to stop and reread. Reteach noticing were that there was a great use of voice; however, the work lacks in sentence and story structures. Next steps included to be more mindful during read alouds, model pausing at punctuation, model how to stop and edit during the writing process early on, to incorporate more partner work, and to push voice during the beginning of the year.

- Weekly scheduled teacher team meetings involve staff members in collaborative inquiry work, data dives, and curriculum planning. Teachers played a key role in developing their own norms for meetings and continue to use a uniform agenda process that is reviewed by the administrative team. Teams use a formalized rolling agenda with specific protocols for data dives, curriculum planning, and looking at student work. The formal Data Wise process guides the school in using data to inform instruction. Each grade team uses a Google Docs website to upload their work so that administrators are able to monitor the work and staff members can reference it as needed. Schoolwide, grade teams and the ICT, have made impact on building teacher capacity and student learning. Teachers have improved their teacher practice through team collaborations. As one teacher reported, “It’s really helpful, you may be doing something in your classroom with your students and you hear how your colleague approaches something differently. I will come down to our meeting and ask, ‘Somebody come and look at this.’”

- The impact of teacher inquiry team work focused on analyzing student writing pieces and ongoing review of math standards includes progress towards goals for groups of students. A comparison of the September to January Writing Benchmark shows that the level of students scoring at levels 2, 3 and 4 across all categories increased from 20 percent in September to 24 percent in January. The level of students scoring at levels 3 and 4 across all categories increased from 11 percent in September to 17 percent in January. The percent of students scoring at level 1 across all categories decreased 11 percent. Math assessment data reflects growth on the GO Math! and CMP3 Math interim assessments demonstrated growth of 10 percent across all grades. The largest average growth was evident in the lower grades, with an increase of 16 percent. Use of the iReady platform shows student achievement by students who met their iReady growth targets, 94 percent in ELA and 68 percent in math.